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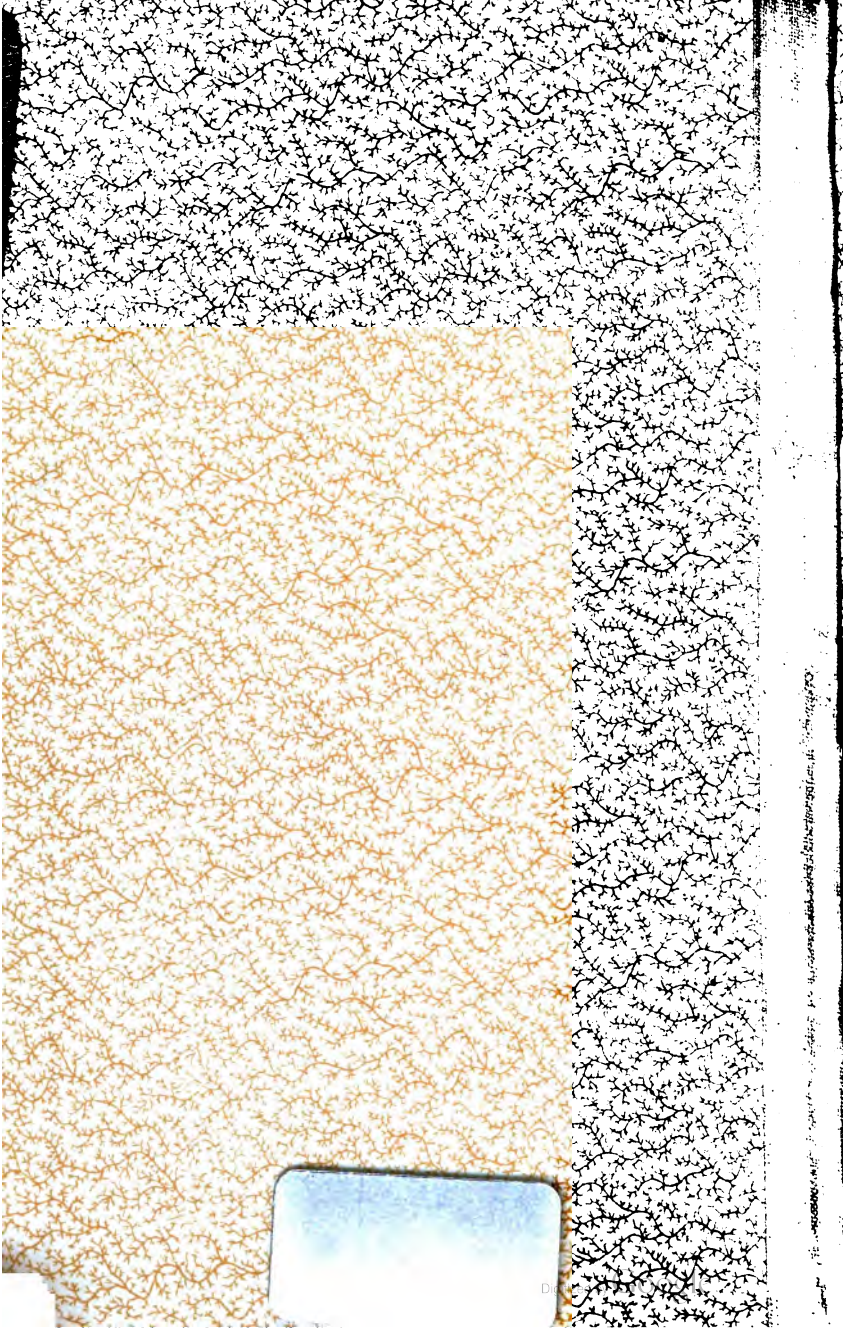
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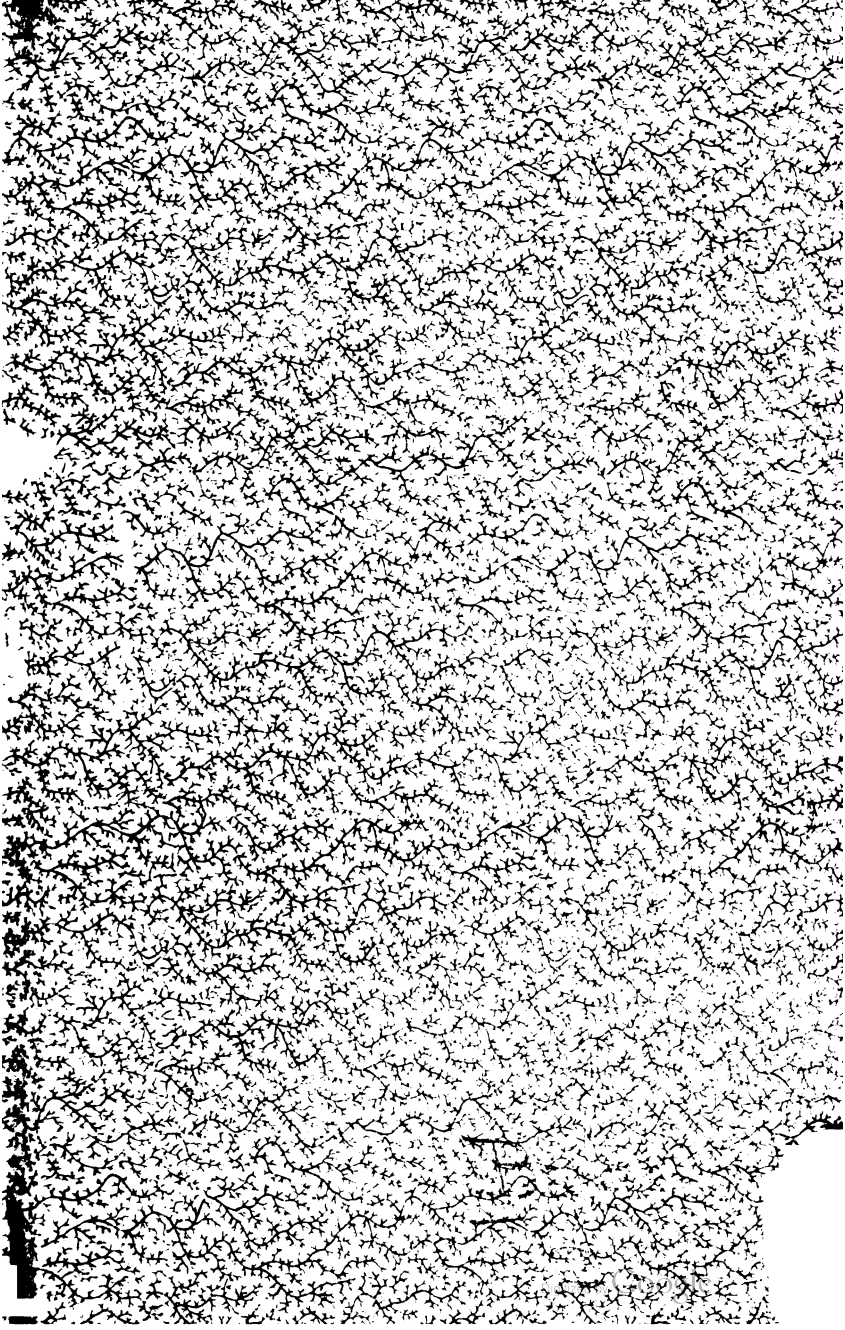
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THE IRISH AGITATOR

In Parliament and on the Platform :

A COMPLETE

HISTORY OF IRISH POLITICS

FOR THE YEAR 1879 ;

WITH A SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

AND

An Appendix,

CONTAINING

DOCUMENTS OF POLITICAL IMPORTANCE
PUBLISHED DURING THE YEAR.

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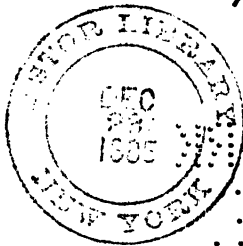
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THE IRISH AGITATOR.

I.—BEFORE PARLIAMENT MET.

The situation at the latter end of 1878.—Mr. Butt's Letter to Dr. Ward deprecating Obstruction, 1879.—The Fenian Devoy's Letter to the *Freeman*.—Mr. O'Donnell's opinion of it.—Mr. Mitchell Henry's Letters on the Home Rule Division.—His Definition of Home Rule.—The *Nation's* Opinion of Mr. Butt.—Mr. O'Shaughnessy on the Land Question.—Mr. Richard Power's Letter on the Situation.—Mr. Parnell in England.—First Meeting in Donegal asking for a reduction of Rents.—Mr. Mitchell Henry at Cadden on Small Farmers.—Mr. Robertson's Reply on behalf of the Graziers.—Mr. Gray at Thurles.—Mr. A. M. Sullivan's Address to the London Home Rule Club on the Irish Vote in England.—The English Press on the Irish University Question.—Elections to the Home Rule League Council.—Dr. M'Hale's Letter.—Dr. Nulty's Letter.—Annual Meeting of Home Rule League.—Impeachment of Mr. Butt.—The National Land Conference—Remonstrance against the Graziers' Claims by Mr. Harris, Representative of Small Farmers.—Meeting in City Hall, Dublin, of Irish Parliamentary Party.—Cork Election.—In Belfast the Ulster Home Government Association holds Annual Conference.—Speech of Mr. Parnell, stating his Policy.

THE last months of 1878 saw what was then known as the Home Rule Party in sore confusion. For a long time, Mr. Butt had been in controversy with Mr. Parnell upon the subject of Obstruction, and had thereby incurred violent attacks by letter from Mr. O'Connor Power and Mr. O'Donnell. Mr. Butt retorted upon the Irre-

concilables and Obstructionists in a most unmistakable manner, and from these collisions at the end of 1878 arose the divisions in the ranks of the Home Rulers, which have been so conspicuous a feature in the Irish political history of 1879.

It is only due to the memory of Mr. Butt, whose good qualities will shine brighter as his defects are forgotten, to remind the Irish public what was his attitude in Irish politics at this period. It will be remembered that Parliament assembled late in 1878 to consider matters connected with foreign policy of an imperial character. Mr. Butt's letter to Dr. Ward, member for Galway, on the eve of the debate upon the Queen's Speech, deprecated any amendment to the address relating to Irish questions being moved. Parliament, he said, was convened for the purpose of deliberating on matters of vital importance to the United Kingdom, and he considered the Irish Parliamentary party would act in a very ill-advised and unwise manner if they interrupted or embarrassed those deliberations by the discussion of questions which could be brought forward with far better chance of success at a future stage of the proceedings of the session. Such a course, Mr. Butt argued, would fairly expose Home Rulers to the suspicion of pressing Irish claims, not for the purpose of obtaining a recognition of them from Parliament, but either with the object of serving the interests of parties, or creating confusion in the councils of a nation at a time when to do so was to help the cause of its enemies. This outspoken letter of Mr. Butt was received with a storm of vituperation and derision from the extreme Left party of Home Rulers. The *Nation* declared, with its usual execrable taste, that "the mantle of O'Connell is in pawn to the Jews. The Home Rule

party has been Bazained. He has gone over to the enemy," &c., &c. But Mr. Butt was firm in his resistance to Obstruction, and in his three letters to the electors of Limerick defined very faithfully the views he held as to the proper and constitutional method of agitating popular measures for Ireland.

We thus find, as the new year commenced, an open revolt in the ranks of Home Rulers. The party of exasperation and obstruction had been denounced by their ancient leader, Mr. Butt, and the differences between the Home Rule Irreconcilables and the Home Rule Constitutionalists became more accentuated than ever they had been during the recess.

Such was the state of affairs which drew forth in the month of January letters on the Irish situation from every section of the Home Rulers. The *Freeman's Journal* was selected as the receptacle for most of these individual manifestoes, from which it is proposed to make sundry extracts bearing upon the then state of the Irish Home Rule party, and upon the events which have subsequently taken place.

Read by the light of recent events, the letter from Mr. Devoy to the *Freeman* [given in full in Appendix A], written from New York and published in that journal, must be placed first in importance, as it is first in date. That letter recalls the reader back to the Fenian rising of 1865, in which Devoy took part. On his apprehension, in 1867, he pleaded guilty to a charge of treason-felony, and was sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude. Before giving shortly the heads of this letter, it is convenient to mention that Mr. Davitt, so recently put upon his trial for sedition, had lectured in Boston in December, 1878, on the same subject as Devoy,

expressed the same principles, and was the constant companion of the writer of this letter. Mr. Devoy's letter is chiefly important for its public disclosure of a new Fenian policy with regard to Ireland—a policy which has been carried out during the past year with vigour and success. Hitherto the Fenian policy had been one of isolation. Such men as O'Donovan Rossa and James Stephens were the head of the physical force party, and with their Dublin organ, the *Irishman*, had always, and still urged that the sword was the only weapon wherewith to win back Ireland for the Irish. Mr. Devoy, however, proposed a new departure, and doubtless with Mr. Davitt's help, laid down the new Fenian policy in very plain language. That policy was intended to be carried out within the limits of existing law. The essence of it was, that “a class of men with strong opinions and habits of organization [in other words Fenians], should enter political life in Ireland.” The object aimed at was the “recovery of Ireland's national independence, and the severance of all political connection with England,” and to gain this, the whole energies, the best intellect, the financial resources and the physical strength of the nation were to be enlisted. Mr. Devoy allowed that most of the individuals responsible for the new departure were not only ineligible to Parliament by being ex-convicts or ticket-of-leave men, but also incapable on conscientious grounds (being members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood) of taking the Parliamentary oath. But this mattered little. Devoy and Co. believed that there were good men enough in the country not bound by pledges, who could be trusted to act honestly in Parliament, and who, if backed by the country, would not hesitate to adopt a bold policy. That such has proved to be the

case is sufficiently evident. But the most important point in the new Fenian policy was the declaration of an organized, steady, and persistent effort to get possession of the local bodies throughout Ireland. The municipal bodies, the Boards of Guardians, the farmers and tenants' clubs, all these were to be honeycombed with Fenianism; and, with the majority of them in their possession, the leaders of the movement flattered themselves they would be in a position, even without Parliamentary representation, to do things which in January, 1879, they could only dream of. "With the municipal bodies," said Mr. Devoy, "and men of spirit and determination as Parliamentary representatives, backed by the country and by millions of the Irish race scattered over the world, there would be no necessity to go to London either to beg or to obstruct, and Irish Nationalists would have no more 'Tallaghts' or 'cabbage gardens' flung in their faces." Home Rule and Mr. Butt's Federal plan are dismissed as absurd. Simple Repeal would restore the Irish House of Lords, an intolerable notion. The only plan worthy of support was to form a common platform which would bind all who advocate "Self-government," withholding any definition of that term, until the country itself should speak in a manner as to command the allegiance of all. So much for Mr. Devoy's scheme for the cohesion of Irish parties. On the Land Question his utterances are noteworthy, read by the light of the subsequent land agitation, and it is as well to give them in full for purposes of reference afterwards :—

"No party or combination of parties in Ireland can ever hope to win the support of the majority of the people except it honestly proposes a radical reform of the land system. No matter what may be said in favour of individual landlords, the whole system was founded on robbery and fraud, and has been perpetuated by cruelty, injustice,

extortion, and hatred of the people. The men who got small farms in the time of confiscation, settled down in the country, and their descendants, no matter what their political party, are now 'bone of our bone'—have become Irish—and perform a useful function in the land. No one thinks of disturbing them. If the landlords had become Irish, and treated the people with humanity, the original robbery might be forgiven—though a radical change in the tenure of land must come of itself some day—but when, as a class, they have simply done England's work of rooting out the Irish people; when the history of landlordism is simply a dark story of heartless cruelty, of artificial famines, of evictions, of rags and squalid misery, there is no reason why we should forget that the system was forced upon us by England, and that the majority of the present landlords are the inheritors of the robber horde sent over by Elizabeth and James the First, by Cromwell and William of Orange, to garrison the country for England. It is the interest of Ireland that the land should be owned by those who till the soil, and this could be reached without even inflicting hardship on those who deserve no leniency at the hands of the Irish people. A solution of the Land Question has been reached, to a large extent, in France, in Prussia, and in Belgium, by enabling the occupiers to purchase their holdings. Let the Irish landlords be given a last chance of settling the Irish Land Question amicably in this manner, or wait for a solution in which they shall have no part.

"Let a beginning be made with the absentees, the English lords and the London companies who hold stolen land in Ireland, and there will be enough of work for some years to come. Let evictions be stopped at all hazards, and the rooting-out process come to an end. But I shall be told the English Parliament will never do any of these things. Then, I say, these things must only wait till an Irish Parliament can do them better; but in the meantime good work will have been done, sound principles inculcated, and the country aroused and organised.

"To those who are alarmed at language like this in regard to the Land Question, I would say: 'Look at France, at Prussia, and at Belgium, and you will find that the secret of their prosperity lies in the number of tillers of the soil who own their holdings. Listen to the mutterings of the coming storm in England, and ask yourselves what is going to become of the land monopoly after a few more years of commercial and manufacturing depression—a depression sure to continue, because the causes of it are on the increase.' The English are a very practical and a very selfish people, and will not let any fine sentiment stand in the way when they think it is their interest to redistribute the land. What, may I ask, would become of the Irish landlords—especially the rack-renting, evicting ones—in case of a social convulsion in England? It is a question which they themselves must decide within the next few years. With them

or without them the question will be settled before long, and many who now think the foregoing assertions extravagant will consider them very moderate indeed by-and-by.

This then was Mr. Devoy's plan for reviving Fenian influence in Ireland, and we find it welcomed by a considerable section of the Home Rule party. The *Nation* said—"It appears to us that the course for the men who think with Mr. Davitt and Mr. Devoy to take is, to turn in whatever strength they can bring to the present constitutional movement, without requiring from those engaged in it any change of front."

Mr. F. H. O'Donnell, in a letter to the *Freeman*, characterized Mr. Devoy's letter as "literally full of broad and statesmanlike ideas," and gave it his full support, notwithstanding that Mr. Devoy in a subsequent letter took care to explain that by the "new departure" he did not propose to give up his principles about fighting, or anything else.

But if Mr. O'Donnell and the Home Rulers represented by the *Nation* agreed to run in harness with the Fenians, there was another section represented by Mr. Mitchell Henry, who flatly refused to do any such thing. Mr. Mitchell Henry drew up his ideas of Home Rule in three letters. The first two were addressed to the *Freeman*. He deliberately stated his belief that unless Mr. Butt was able to lead them during the ensuing session, there was no hope for the Home Rule party as an influential body. "An army without a general is but a rabble ; and I for one distinctly refuse to range myself under the banner of any coterie or clique whatever." As to the new Fenian scheme, Mr. Henry was very plain in his language. "We are invited," he says, "to join those who openly desire to separate Ireland entirely from Eng-

land, to destroy the monarchy, and to substitute either a republic or some other form of government in its place. We are to abandon the specific settlement arrived at in the National Conference of 1873, and henceforth each man is to disguise his real sentiments, and to content himself with the vague term, 'Self-government for Ireland,' without any explanation or limitation of what that self-government is to be. Such an immoral, criminal, and foolish proposal, it is probable was never before addressed to sane men." Mr. Henry next pointed out that Mr. Devoy's invitation was manifestly a reply to some previous communication either on this side of the water, or carried over to America by an authorised agent, and then proceeded to give his own scheme for Home Rule.

This, however, he gave with such distinctness and force, in a letter which appeared in the *Manchester Examiner*, that it is highly desirable to rescue from oblivion and place before the public one of the few brief expositions of the meaning of Home Rule that has as yet appeared.

"Roughly speaking," says Mr. Henry, "I may say that the proposal is to apply the American State Constitution to Ireland. In that country each State has its own local Parliament, and the Federal Government has the Parliament in Washington. As regards our own country, the present Parliament would undergo no change, but it would not attend to Irish local affairs, such as education, rail-works, waterworks, fisheries, and such like ; these would be attended to by Irish members responsible to the Queen and the Irish Parliament, and of course the Irish members would have nothing to say to the local affairs of England or Scotland. The United Parliament at Westminster would raise in Ireland, on its own authority, the taxes necessary for Imperial affairs, such as the Army and Navy, the Crown, Colonies, and foreign affairs ; and it would, of course, have as many soldiers in Ireland as it liked, and as many ships round the coast. I need hardly say there would be no interference with customs, duties, which stipulations would be specially provided in the Act to give effect to the Home Rule proposal, and there would also be provisions for religious equality, and other important matters."

Such were Mr. Henry's views on Home Rule, and such were the views of Mr. Butt, and that party of Irish politicians who hoped by moderation to impress their convictions upon the British Parliament. But such views were scouted by the *Nation*. Mr. Butt made a speech at a banquet given in January to General Grant, in which he followed up the note struck in his letter to Dr. Ward. The *Nation* commented upon it thus—"It defines his [Mr. Butt's] attitude towards the power which holds Ireland in chains, and that attitude, we have no hesitation in saying, is one which no true Irish Nationalist could for a moment deliberately assume."

While the vital differences between the two sections of the Home Rule party on what was then the chief object of agitation were thus being made public, Mr. O'Shaughnessy at Limerick was introducing the Land Question. We have given the Fenian opinion upon this great bone of contention. Let us now see what were the views of the moderate party. Mr. O'Shaughnessy would place the rest of Ireland on the same footing as Ulster. The three incidents to Ulster tenancies he contended were, Fixity of Tenure, in other words, the right of the tenant to remain in possession *as long as he paid his rent*, without fear of eviction; the second was Free Sale, that is to say, the right of sale to an unobjectionable successor; the third incident touched upon the question of raising the rent.

"The right of the landlord to raise the rent," says Mr. O'Shaughnessy, "under certain circumstances is not denied; but he should be prevented from raising it to such a height that it ceases to be profitable for an honest and skilful tenant to keep his holding. It is also necessary to prevent a landlord from using the increase of rent as a means of eviction."

These words are remarkable as a fair statement of the

views of the moderate Home Rule party on the Land Question, and deserve to be placed on record.

If there was any further evidence wished for to prove the division of the Home Rule party at the very commencement of the year 1879, it may be found in a letter to the *Freeman*, dated 13th January, from Mr. Richard Power, member for Waterford city. Above all things, he says, as a Home Ruler, he deploras the fact that the vital question of Home Rule had been for so long left in the background. "There are two flags," he says, "flying in the Home Rule camp, two policies before the country, the once united party is divided into two factions."

In the midst of all this din of party discord died Mr. M'Carthy Downing, member for County Cork. In 1858, when the Phoenix conspirators were arrested, Mr. Downing acted as their solicitor, and was elected member for Cork county at the general election of 1860, and sat for that constituency until his death.

Early in January Mr. Parnell commenced a political tour in England in his capacity of President of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, and projected visits, all of which did not come off, to Sunderland, Hull, Leeds, and Warrington. For this month, too, the first meeting of tenant-farmers, for the purpose of calling for reduced rents, was held in the town of Donegal. Mr. Mitchell Henry also addressed a meeting of his constituents at Clifden, and made some remarks on the Land Question worthy of notice. He drew the distinction between the claims of the small tenant-farmers and the claims of such farmers as composed the Dublin National Land Conference—men who held "great big grazing farms," which they were anxious to include in any pro-

[Jan.] an.]

direct endowment at once to the Catholic University. But this sudden interest in the Irish University Question was not destined to be rewarded by a Government measure at once. The opinions and principles, however, laid down by English writers were valuable, and excited great attention in Ireland.

On the last Saturday of January the Irish Home Rule League Council was newly elected. The Council is supposed to exercise a nominal authority over the Home Rule policy as a whole, but individual members of the League have long since proved that they do not recognise its authority. The battle which was once more fought in these elections for the Council was Right *versus* Left—a trial, in fact, of strength between the parties who acknowledged Mr. Butt and Mr. Parnell as their leaders. Major O’Gorman was among those coöpted to assist the Council, but he refused to act, in a letter, couched in the following characteristic terms, to the Secretary of the League :—

“SIR,—I understand that I am ‘coöpted’ a member of the Home Rule League Council. I should have been satisfied, nay gratified, to have been elected by the Irishmen who elected the fifty ‘angels,’ but as I decidedly object to be elected by the ‘angels’ themselves, I request that you will immediately remove my name from the list of the ‘coöpted.’—Yours truly,

“PURCELL O’GORMAN.”

Mr. Mitchell Henry came out at the head of the poll, Mr. Butt being next, but these leaders of the Right section were amply balanced by such members of the “party of exasperation,” as Messrs. Parnell, Biggar, and O’Connor Power. Dr. Ward, until then Secretary of the “Irish Parliamentary Party,” received his dismissal, as did Major O’Gorman, Dr. O’Leary, Mr. King-Harman, and

other members of parliament who followed Mr. Butt. Neither Mr. A. M. Sullivan nor Mr. O'Donnell sought re-election; the latter in a letter to the *Times* on the subject saying that the idealist character of the Home Rule League policy was more impracticable than ever.

It is now time to take cognizance of the ecclesiastical utterances upon the subject of Home Rule. The Most Rev. Dr. MacHale, Catholic Archbishop of Tuam, had very early in January written a letter to the *Freeman*, deprecating the acknowledged discord of the Home Rule party. "It is high time," he says, "that a term be put to the disheartening divisions that prevail in the ranks of the Irish popular representatives in the British House of Parliament. The evils of discord, existing for some time past, have been aggravated by recent manifestations as senseless as the worst enemies of Ireland could desire. The nation heartily laments the existence of such dissensions, and will suffer no longer the continuance of a disorder that paralyses the best energies of all for the common benefit of their native land. Let the existence of Home Rule be vigorously insisted upon." The archbishop concluded by recommending unity, and above all that consideration to Mr. Butt's views, to which they were entitled. Just one month afterward, the Most Rev. Dr. Nulty, Catholic Bishop of Meath, addressed a letter to the Archbishop of the West, which had all the length and weight of a political pastoral. It will be found in full in the Appendix. It was in effect an outspoken opinion of the probable result of the "Policy of Activity." Dr. Nulty calls upon the Obstructives at once to lay down their arms.

The bishop declares that the result of the "policy of division," as he calls it, will be to make all future

beneficial legislation impossible. As long as the country believed in the efficacy and practicability of constitutional agitation, the national sentiment put forth its strength with good results. But when the country shall no longer believe in the success of these peaceful movements, this national instinct, says the bishop, will show itself in its most terrible and dangerous form. True as the needle to the pole, it will struggle still for the attainment of its purposes, no longer by peaceable and legal effort, but through secret and unlawful combination. Dr. Nulty then proceeded to make a remarkable forecast of the probable effects of the new policy :—"Under the influence of an irrepressible feeling, the time will come when the youth and masses of the Irish people will, in the bitterness of their disappointment and despair, throw themselves into the arms of the wildest and most revolutionary form of Fenianism." Dr. Nulty's great objection to Mr. Parnell's policy was that it led to disunion, and the abuse and misapplication of obstruction. A policy of blind, indiscriminate, and undiscerning opposition to all legislation, Dr. Nulty stigmatised as not only undignified but irrational. No deliberative assembly in the world, the right reverend gentleman declared, with any regard for its own character or dignity, would for a moment tolerate it. The only genuine policy of parliamentary obstruction Dr. Nulty described as essentially thoughtful, discriminating, and judicious. In conclusion, Mr. Butt was put forward as still the only possible leader for the Home Rule party, and commended as such to the Home Rule public.

With these utterances from thoughtful and able members of the Catholic Church ringing in their ears, the members of the Home Rule League assembled on Feb-

ruary 5th in Dublin, for the annual general meeting. The financial state of the League may be gathered from a statement of Mr. T. H. Webb, that £32 was due to the Treasurer. The Chairman, Mr. W. Shaw, M.P., then invited discussion, by saying frankly "that if they had a difference, to discuss it there, and have it out, and not leave it seething and sweltering from year to year." Mr. Butt's formal impeachment then commenced. The first resolution asked the meeting to express its approval of certain declarations made by Mr. Butt at the National Conference of 1873, when the Home Rule League was founded. The exact words which Mr. Butt used were as follows :—

That "the more every Irish member keeps aloof from all private communications with English ministers or English parties the better." That "there is enmity between the Irish Government and the Irish nation," and that "the representatives of the people must accept this position." That "they should hold no private parley with the power which is at war with the Irish people, and with which, therefore, the Irish members should be at war."

Mr. John Dillon, son of the late Mr. John Blake Dillon, barrister, who appeared in arms at Ballingarry with Smith O'Brien in 1848, and for whose arrest the Government offered £300 reward, opened the impeachment of Mr. Butt. The character and size of the meeting he described in frank terms. "Formerly," he said, "their benches were crowded by the Irish members. Where are they now? Like the rats they were leaving the sinking ship. The power of the League in the country was at an end. He believed it was working against Irish Nationality. Mr. Butt had turned his back on the policy he taught them. Mr. Butt was constantly in the Castle negotiating with the Lord Lieutenant, and he believed Mr. Butt would put a stopper on the Irish party next session."

In reply Mr. Butt was dignified and argumentative though his tone proclaimed that he was cut to the heart. He declared that to quote his own words was a mere quibble, with a view to fastening an inconsistency on him. On only one point had his actions been scrutinized and compared with his words; there was not a single point raised except that on which he had distinctly said that he laid down no inflexible rule. "If the party," he continued, "opposed to him were ready for rebellion, he could understand the policy of exasperation. The first thing they should do was to remove all suspicion of there being any revolutionary element in their programme. But if it comes to this," concluded Mr. Butt, "that men will not disclaim that our movement here is but to be a cover to separation, then I say every honest man must leave this movement. This was the reason why the League meeting was not attended, because men had lost confidence that they were not in the hands of revolutionists." Weighty and deliberate words these falling from a politician of Mr. Butt's experience and intimate acquaintance with the inner life of Irish politics and politicians. Mr. Parnell was the next accuser, and he spoke plainly likewise. "We charge Mr. Butt with inactivity," was the theme of his impeachment, and he neither respected nor spared the achievements and the infirmities of the old Home Rule chieftain. From a historical point of view, the most valuable statement which fell from Mr. Parnell was the explanation of a portion of his future Parliamentary policy, and it is here given in full :—

"I wish to explain in a few words what I wish the Irish party to do, and Mr. Butt to do. The late Mr. Ronayne it was who said to me, and said to a good many others, that the Irish party would never be a power in the House of Commons until they took an interest in English and Imperial questions. He used to say,

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‘Depend upon it, as long as you keep bringing forward the Land Bill or the Franchise Question, or other Irish questions, they won’t care anything about you. They will perhaps listen, or perhaps they will not, but in any case they will come in with a big number of members to vote you down when the division bell rings, and they will be perfectly ready to surrender a few Wednesdays for these discussions. They will be nothing the worse of it, and you will be nothing the better ; but depend on it, it is for some of you young men of the party who have time, and health, and strength to go into these questions, to take up these bills and discuss them in detail, and to show that if you are not allowed to govern yourselves at home, you can at least help them in governing England.’”

The final result of the meeting was, that in deference to Mr. Butt, who declared the resolution to be a vote of censure upon himself, an amendment was substituted of a more general character, enjoining more energetic action in Parliament, and increased activity and attendance.

One of the most remarkable facts noticeable about this meeting of the Home Rule League before the session is, that throughout the proceedings the Land Question was not alluded to. Some resolutions of Mr. Dillon, condemnatory of the Land system, were mentioned, but not put to the meeting.

But if no mention of the Land Question was made at the Home Rule League Meeting, on 4th February, that subject was specially discussed on the next day at the Rotundo by the members of the National Land Conference. As the first meeting of the year devoted to this question, it requires notice. The following members of Parliament were present :—Messrs. Henry, Errington, Callan, O’Clery, Kirk, Martin, Q.C. ; Parnell, O’Donnell, Biggar, Brooks, Ennis, Richard Power, Smyth, Meldon, Q.C. ; O’Sullivan, O’Leary, Fay, and Sir Joseph M’Kenna. The resolutions passed were as follows :—

“ 1. That the experience of every year continues to confirm the truth of the opinion, so often expressed at representative conferences

of the tenant-farmers of Ireland, that further protection for the occupier of the soil in the security of his home and the enjoyment of the fruits of his industry, is absolutely necessary for the peace and prosperity of the country, and for the full development of the great sources of wealth which Ireland possesses in the fertility and great agricultural capabilities of her soil.

"2. That we are still of opinion that these great objects can best be obtained by the Bill prepared by Mr. Butt, a Bill which virtually extends to all Ireland the benefits secured to the Northern farmers by the Ulster custom of tenant-right; and we desire emphatically to record our conviction that the provisions of that Bill ought on any future introduction be applied to all classes of Irish farms, so as to restore the Bill to the shape in which it was originally framed.

"3. That the great depression which has now fallen on the agricultural interest of Ireland makes it absolutely necessary that the attention of Parliament and the country should be at once directed to the importance, both to the landlords and tenants, and to all classes of Ireland, of giving to the tenant that security of tenure which would enable him, by industry and care, to acquire a property in his farm which would place him in a position to meet such vicissitudes.

"And we consider it is the duty of the Irish Parliamentary party to use such pressure as may be necessary to induce the Government to grant this claim.

"4. That it is becoming every day more apparent that a just settlement of the Land Question is a matter of the deepest importance, not only to the tenant-farmers, but also for every section of the community, and we therefore call upon every class in town and country to give their influence and aid to the emancipation of the occupier of the soil from the grievances of class domination, and the evils arising from undue privileges attaching to ownership in land.

"5. That no legislation on the Land Question can be accepted as satisfactory or final which does not sufficiently provide house sites and suitable lots of land for *bona fide* agricultural labourers' houses.

"6. That Mr. Butt be requested, as leader of the Irish Parliamentary party, to make arrangements to have the Land Question brought before the House of Commons during the next session of Parliament in every available form, and that we earnestly call upon the electors of Ireland to press on their representatives the imperative duty of supporting those efforts.

"7. That the Conference earnestly urges on every constituency in Ireland to prepare for the next general election, and on that occasion to make the most determined stand for tenant-right, and under the protection of the Ballot to return no candidate to Parliament who refuses to pledge himself to the foregoing resolutions with the view of carrying them into law, and that the several Tenant Right Associations organize their respective counties for this purpose.

"8. That this meeting is of opinion that it is desirable that the application of the Bright Clauses of the Land Act should be further extended by simplifying conveyances, and by more liberal advances being made by the Government to enable tenants to purchase their holdings under the said Act, and that our thanks are due to Mr. Shaw Lefevre for his enlightened efforts in that direction."

In Mr. Butt's Land Bill the interests and aspirations of the large graziers had been sacrificed to those of the small farmers, and the most important point to be noticed in these resolutions is the emphatic stress laid in Resolution 2 upon the necessity of those interests being consulted in any future introduction of that Bill. In connection with this it may be remarked, that a number of influential graziers attended and addressed the meeting. Mr. Parnell suggested an amendment to Resolution 3, which was carried, and incorporated into it. The reader will perceive the amendment above, the words being in italics. In speaking to that amendment, Mr. Parnell said that he believed that a united party of forty or fifty determined Irishmen could bring such pressure to bear on the present Government as would induce them to make very considerable concessions on the Land Question. He did not wish on that occasion to point out how that pressure ought to be brought to bear. He did not want to fetter the Irish party. Let them meet and consider how that pressure should be brought to bear. If they failed to find this out, it would then be time for him to ask the tenant-farmers of Ireland how it was to be done,

But while the interests of a comparatively wealthy class, the graziers, were being looked after in a public Conference, under the auspices of Members of Parliament, the *Freeman's Journal* gave insertion to a manifesto from the small farmers of Ireland, which must not be overlooked in dealing with the Land Question. Mr. Harris,

Hon. Sec. to the Ballinasloe Tenants' Defence Association, was the scribe, and his opinions were frankly and ably stated. He said the proceedings of the Land Conference caused a general feeling of uneasiness among the small farmers and tenants in his part of the country. Fears were entertained that the Tenant-right movement had got into the hands of men who preferred their own interests to the interests of the country. "There were two classes of men," he said, "present at the Conference, graziers and Members of Parliament. It is easy to understand the motives of the graziers; and as for the M.P.'s, I fear none of them, with the exception of Mr. Henry, had given sufficient thought to the subject, particularly to the vast importance of retaining the £50 valuation clause." Mr. Harris insisted that the principle of Mr. Butt's Land Bill should be the same as that of the Land Act, 1870—that it should be a poor man's protective Bill, not a Bill to secure graziers and their beasts upon the land from which they may have assisted to uproot an industrious peasantry. An enormous amount of the land of Ireland, Mr. Harris pointed out, was in the hands of graziers, and therefore the landlords should oppose the graziers' claims far more strenuously than those of the small farmers. The landlords had nothing to fear from the graziers, as far as public odium or opinion, for "the graziers themselves are as unpopular as the worst class of landlords."

A few days after the National Land Conference, the Irish Parliamentary Party held a private meeting in Dublin, at the City Hall. Only fifteen members attended. Mr. Butt was in the chair, and his opponents were only conspicuous by their absence. The following are the names of those present:—Messrs. Butt, Nolan,

Gray, Martin, Q.C., Errington, Delahunty, Fay, Callan, O'Leary, Browne, Brooks, Meldon, Ffrench, O'Clery, and Sir J. M'Kenna. The principal business concluded was the appointment of "whips," the election of a Committee, and a vote of condolence to the family of the late Mr. Downing.

Meanwhile the Cork election was progressing. The candidates at first were two Home Rulers, Colonel Colthurst, and Mr. Denis Florence M'Carthy. The latter gentleman, however, retired, and another candidate came forward in the Conservative interest, Sir George Colthurst, who, however, was defeated by a large majority, 8,157 votes to 2,027.

In Belfast the Ulster Home Government Association held its Annual Conference on 10th February. The following resolution was carried :—

"That all Governments founded on force are illegitimate. The Government of England in Ireland has been founded on force, maintained by force, and, therefore, it is the duty of all generous minds to resist lawless power, and to replace it by a Government of opinion in conformity with the will of the people; and it is the conviction of this meeting that an Irish Parliament is the only authority the people can look up to, seeing it alone can beget public spirit and a sound public opinion."

In supporting this resolution, Mr. Parnell made a speech, remarkable for an enunciation of policy. He first alluded to the force of public opinion in England, and stated that there was really no public opinion in Ireland to appeal to. He declared it to be the duty of the Irish statesman who lays claim to the title, to find out some means of impressing upon the British Government the necessity of dealing with Irish questions. Mr. Parnell then described the true Parliamentary policy. When Irish measures were voted down by large majori-

ties, members should show their exasperation by means of such discussion as arose on the English Prisons Bill.

“It is perfectly simple,” said Mr. Parnell. “Give me any single Irish question, and it is a mere matter of detail to arrange and carry out the policy for the purpose of impressing the Government with the necessity of dealing with that Irish question.”

With this meeting ends the register of Irish politics before the assembly of Parliament on 13th February. The characteristics of those politics up to this period seem to be a general tendency to political letter-writing, and the more decided accentuation of the discord and division amongst the Home Rulers, Mr. Butt and Mr. Parnell representing the Right and Left of the Party.

II.—IN PARLIAMENT.

Opening of Parliament 13th February.—Chancellor of Exchequer's Statement.—Major O'Gorman.—The Irish Borough Franchise.—Introduction of new rules for the business of the House.—The *Times* in trouble.—Illness of Mr. Butt.—The County Franchise.—Lord C. Hamilton on Ireland.—Mr. Biggar at Bermondsey.—Mr. O'Shaughnessy on Irish Administration.—Sir S. Ibbetson on Irish Board of Works.—Major O'Gorman and the Waterford Dry Dock.—Mr. O'Donnell on Mixed Education.—Army Estimates.—S. Patrick's Night.—Sir P. O'Brien and the Irish Guards.—Mr. Biggar and Lord Elcho: great uproar.—Mr. Parnell at Glasgow: statement of policy.—Mr. Samuelson's Resolution on the Agricultural Holdings' Act.—Mr. O'Donnell thereon.—First Land policy of Mr. O'Donnell 17th March.—Mr. Blennerhassett on the Land Act.—The Convention Act.—Major O'Reilly made Assistant Commissioner of Irish Education.—Sir Charles Dilke's Resolution on Zulu War: Action of Home Rulers.—Lord Robert Montague retires publicly from Home Rule Party.—Mr. Justin M'Carthy elected for Longford.—Sir Brien O'Loughlen unseated for Clare.—The *Nation's* View of the Home Rule Situation.—Easter Recess.—Land Demonstration at Kilnaleck, County Cavan, 14th April.—Enunciations of Messrs. Fay, Biggar; Mr. Parnell's policy at that time.—Letter from Mr. O'Donnell.—Parliament re-assembled 17th April.—Central Tenants' Defence Association Meeting in Dublin.—First Resolution for reduction of Rents.—Rev. Mr. Toomey on this occasion the first advocate of Mr. Parnell's subsequent advice to Tenants.—Mr. Parnell's Speech.—Mr. O'Donnell on Mixed Education again.—Obstruction on the Estimates.—First Great Public Demonstration on Land Question at Irishtown 20th April.—Speeches of Daly, Brennan, O'Sullivan, Ferguson, and Power.—Mr. Lefevre's Motion on an Irish Peasant Proprietary.—Registration of Voters' Act (Ireland).—Mr. Macartney's Ulster Tenant Right Bill.—Death of Mr. Butt.—Mr. O'Clery's Irish Volunteer Bill.—Irish Viceregal Estimates challenged.—Mr. Butt's Land Bill rejected by 172.—The O'Connor Don's University Bill.—Clare Election.—Election of Mr. Shaw as Chairman of Home Rule Party.—Adjournment for Whitsuntide Recess.—Ultimatum of Messrs. O'Donnell and O'Connor Power in calling attention to Irish Distress: significant Speeches.—The *Nation's* View of Obstruction.—Limerick Election.—Proposed repeal of Convention Act.—The Anti-

Rent Meeting at Westport on 8th June.—Advice of Mr. Parnell to Tenants to keep “a firm grip” on the Land first given.—First appearance of Michael Davitt, ex-Political Prisoner, on the public platform in Ireland.—Archbishop of Tuam’s Condemnation of the Demonstration.—Reassembling of Parliament.—New Policy of Obstruction.—Outcry on the part of the Press and the Public: Extracts from the Press.—Anti-Rent Meeting at Milltown on June 15th, still more violent Speeches from Daly, Davitt, and Brennan.—Final Repeal of the Convention Act.—Mr. Callan on the Milltown Meeting.—Extraordinary Scene between Mr. Lowther and Mr. O’Connor Power in the House: General Uproar.—Numerous Meetings in June of Farmers’ Clubs.—Continued Obstruction on the Army Bill.—Government University Bill introduced and read a second time in the Lords.—More Scenes in the House.—“The Young Gentleman in the Gallery.”—The Speaker Arraigned.—More Anti-Rent Meetings.—Obstruction continued on the Army Bill and Estimates.—Election of Mr. Finigan for Ennis.—Discussion on the University Bill: second Reading carried.—Irish Estimates discussed.—Demonstration at Shrile: Davitt’s Speech.—Mr. Parnell and the *Freeman*.—Convention of Home Rule Confederation.—University Bill passed.—Prorogation of Parliament.

THE Chancellor of the Exchequer, in stating the Ministerial programme for the session on the opening of Parliament, February 13th, announced the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill dealing with the Grand Jury system in Ireland. In replying to the complaints of Irish members at the meagreness of the Government measures for Ireland, the Chancellor went a little further. He pointed to a strengthening of the Board of Works and a consolidation of its Acts and functions, as well as an application of portion of the Church Surplus to satisfying the claims of the Irish National Schoolmasters. All mention of the Irish University and Land Questions was omitted. The result was that Major Nolan, declaring that Ireland was “baffled and humbugged,” moved an amendment to the Address to the effect that such omission was calculated to produce great discontent in Ireland.

Mr. O'Connor Power seconded the amendment, which was defeated by 47.

For the motion, 72 ; for the amendment, 25.

On this occasion Major O'Gorman, who was received with cheers, said—

"Sir, I am extremely glad at everything that has occurred in this House to-night (cheers). I am delighted beyond anything I can say that the Government has treated this great question with regard to Ireland in the manner they have, for nothing can rejoice more my heart than to see that the English Government—as they have always done for centuries—still continue to trample on us in as unjust a manner as possible; and nothing can rejoice me more, also, than to feel—as I believe every Irishman should feel—that we feel for it the utmost hatred and contempt" (cheers).

On the 14th February, Mr. Meldon brought forward the question of the Irish Borough Franchise. He appealed to the Government to extend household suffrage to Ireland, and thereby assimilate the franchise in the United Kingdom. No man in Ireland was entitled to a vote unless he was rated at £4, and Mr. Meldon alleged that in consequence of the low valuation, that rating was equivalent to £6 in England. He was for giving political power to the great mass of the people. Mr. Meldon was supported by the Liberal party. Lord Randolph Churchill made a public recantation of his former opinions, and argued that the proposed measures would bring within the franchise classes who were disloyal in feeling, and likely to form into secret societies. The motion was lost by 69. For, 187 ; against, 256.

On February 17th, the Government brought forward the new rules relating to the business, or, as the *Nation* frankly expressed it, for muzzling the Obstructives ; but after three nights' debate in the week no progress had been made, and the House was adjourned, without even

one of the Chancellor's resolutions having been adopted. Mr. Parnell, supported by the English Liberals, did much to prolong and defeat the motion. The subject, however, was renewed, and, after a lengthy discussion, in which the Obstructionists again took a leading part, the first resolution was passed with some modifications. The *Times* made some comments in a leading article upon the debate, which induced Mr. Mitchell Henry to bring forward the matter as a breach of privilege. The words complained of were, "The Home Rulers watched the debates of Parliament with a malign intent, and at a given moment, as soon as the opposition of the independent appeared to have exhausted itself, the Obstructionists emerged from their ambush for the purpose of putting into operation their policy of exasperation." Mr. Henry moved that the words were libellous reflections on members of the House. The Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted that the *Times* had passed the bounds of legitimate criticism, but urged that the motion for bringing the printer and publisher of the *Times* before the House should be withdrawn. Mr. Henry, in reply, said his object was gained, and the matter dropped. Mr. Shaw, in the course of his speech, said that the only paper he feared was the *Skibbereen Eagle*, which had terrified a greater man, Lord Palmerston.

At the end of February and the beginning of March Irish affairs in the House were somewhat slack and uninteresting. In fact, the speakers were chiefly Mr. Parnell and his small band of followers. Mr. Butt had not appeared upon the Parliamentary scene owing to illness, which had brought him at the end of February into actual danger, and kept him for weeks in a most precarious condition.

In the beginning of March Mr. Trevelyan brought forward his motion on the County Franchise, viz., to establish household franchise throughout the United Kingdom. In the course of the debate Ireland was made a prominent subject of discussion. Lord Claude Hamilton in the course of his speech made use of strong language. He asked :—

“What happened after the last Reform Bill in Ireland in 1867? The Government of the right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich passed two great Acts, which I shall still continue to call confiscation and spoliation, for the express purpose of pacifying the people of Ireland, and making them contented. If it had not been for the hopes held out that the people would really be pacified and made content, the House would never have agreed to those Acts. Well, what is the position of Ireland at the present moment? Is it pacified or contented? I say it is at the present moment in as great a state of ‘veiled rebellion’ as it was when Mr. Disraeli used that celebrated phrase in this House. And what is the class in Ireland in whom this deep feeling of disaffection is most rooted? Why, sir, the Roman Catholic peasantry. If you search Europe through I do not believe you will find any class so ignorant, so bigoted, so devoid of all knowledge of the principles of government as the Irish Roman Catholic peasantry (oh, oh); and yet the hon. gentleman proposes to hand over the representation of Ireland to that class. Is the noble lord so ignorant of human nature (cries of ‘oh, oh!’)—well of Irish nature (oh! oh! and cheers)—as to suppose that the whole feeling and sentiment of the people can be changed in four short years? Is he not aware—as he used to be daily made aware through his Under Secretary, and the many sources of information open to the Chief Secretary—that murders are still committed in Ireland without detection, and base outrages perpetrated; that trial by jury is very often little better than a farce; and that the minds of the people of Ireland are daily poisoned by a pernicious and seditious press? (Conservative cheers.) What did Mr. Chichester Fortescue say with regard to the press of Ireland in the speech to which I have referred? When I say the press of Ireland—of course I allude to the National, not the general press—he said it was well known how it teaches and preaches in every form, with an amount of boldness and audacity, from week to week and month to month, hatred of the Government and institutions of the United Kingdom. He said it was well known that this weekly literature poisoned the minds of the people in Ireland who read it, against all law, and against the Constitution of their country—that it was known how it

made it impossible for those who read that literature and none other to know the truth with respect to public affairs, and the conduct of the Government of the country. But I say that the pernicious conduct of that press continues at the present day."

Sir W. Barttelot also spoke to the effect that if the resolution were carried, it would simply increase the power of the class which the member for Meath represented.

Early in March Mr. Biggar came before the public in Bermondsey, and addressed a meeting of Irishmen on the "Future of the Irish Race." His speech is so full of the American democratic spirit, and contains so pointed an allusion to Fenianism, that it is considered advisable to give the *Times'* report (4th March) *in extenso* :—

"Mr. Biggar, M.P., addressed a meeting of Irishmen in Bermondsey, on Sunday evening, on 'The Future of the Irish Race.' By 'the Irish race' Mr. Biggar said he meant to include all Irishmen of the Roman Catholic faith wherever they were to be found. Protestants he did not consider Irishmen at all. They were merely West Britons, who had, by accident, been born in Ireland, and from his own experience he could say they were the bitterest enemies of Ireland. He rejoiced that Irishmen had clung to their faith. It was that which had preserved their nationality, and had prevented their being absorbed and lost sight of in the great English and Scotch towns where they had settled. By Mr. Gladstone's Land Act the tenant-farmer of Ireland had been considerably benefited. He could obtain compensation for his improvements, and thereby escape the workhouse in his old age. But how was that Act obtained? By fear. Mr. Gladstone himself admitted that it was the Fenian rising which impelled him to it. Now he (Mr. Biggar) would not say whether he himself was or was not a Fenian, but if anyone called him a Fenian he would answer that he did not count that any disgrace. Physical force was the one thing for which the English governing classes cared. They cared nothing for justice, they cared nothing for reason, they cared nothing for the rights of the people, either Irish or English. They were moved only by their fears. He did not mean their fears for their personal safety. They knew they had the police and the military to protect them, and they did not fear personal violence. But it was possible—he would not say probable—that some fine day the democracy would break loose, that

the London warehouses and the Lancashire factories would be reduced to ashes, and the shipping in the Thames and the Mersey set on fire; and that was an outlook which the English governing classes did not like. At present the English democracy was entirely unrepresented in the House of Commons. That was owing to the fact that the management of Parliamentary elections was still in the same corrupt hands as before the passing of the last Reform Act. But he thought it would not consent to remain unrepresented much longer, and it was the duty and the interest of the Irish party—itsself essentially democratic—to ally itself with the English democracy. He urged all his countrymen to unite in some organisation—he did not care which—and make as much display of physical force as possible. They might be few in numbers, but when they remembered the great results which flowed from the determined action of the handful of men at Manchester and Clerkenwell, they could not doubt of their ultimate success. Mr. Biggar was frequently applauded throughout his speech, and at its conclusion received a vote of thanks."

Mr. O'Shaughnessy, on March 6th, brought forward a motion upon the administration of Irish affairs in the following terms:—

"The system of limiting the number of Ministers entrusted with the direction of Irish departments, and sitting in this House, to one, is productive of abuse and neglect in the government and administration of Ireland, and requires to be altered."

The speaker pointed out how, in his opinion, the Parliamentary government of Ireland was only nominal, it being in effect a bureaucracy. The various duties connected with the Home department, the Local Government Board, the Poor Laws, and the Laws of Health, were in England represented in Parliament. In Ireland not only did all these duties fall on the shoulders of one man, Mr. James Lowther, the Chief Secretary, but many other burdens. He was responsible for the large and complicated system of Irish Education; and he assumed the proportions of a Minister of War, when he came to answer for that military organisation which went under the name of the Constabulary. Mr. Meldon, Mr. Parnell,

Mr. O'Connor Power, and Mr. Sullivan, all made long speeches on the subject, which was met in a somewhat playful and bantering tone by Mr. Lowther. Mr. Sullivan said he never complained of the Chief Secretary's good-humour, personal amiability, or courtesy, but of the inactivity, lethargy, and fatal torpor which, in obedience to some word of command, had recently come over the policy of the Government of Ireland.

Some supplementary estimates belonging to last year were then brought forward, and led to a long and obstructive discussion. Mr. Parnell moved the rejection of the vote for the expenses of the Irish Chief Secretary's offices in Dublin and London, as he thought, for what benefit the country derived from the Chief Secretary, they might as well be without his office at all.

An official utterance in the course of this discussion, with regard to the Board of Works (Ireland), is worthy of record as a partial answer to Mr. O'Shaughnessy's motion. In reply to Mr. Henry, Sir Selwyn Ibbetson said the Government proposed—

“To add to the strength of that Board, in order to bring it up to the number of Commissioners which was originally intended, and also to pass an Act in this session, if possible, to consolidate the whole of the Irish Acts dealing with the operation of the Board of Works. They proposed to amend, according to some recommendations of the committee, certain of the functions of the Board, and they intended to nominate a member of the Government, a member also of the Treasury, as an *ex-officio* member of the Board of Works, so that the Board might be represented as a distinct Board in the House of Commons (hear, hear). He will sit as a member of the Board, and will therefore be aware of the action of the Board, and at the same time will be a representative of the Treasury. That was the scheme it was the intention of the Government to propose, with a view of carrying out some of the recommendations of the committee. It might take some little time before it was possible to put it in form before the House, but he trusted a real amendment of the Board of Works would take place.”

During this debate Major O'Gorman made a short speech upon a dry dock for Waterford, which reveals some unexplained dilatory conduct in that city. The gallant member said he—

“Wished to bear his testimony to the great kindness and politeness of the financial Secretary of the Treasury (Sir H. S. Ibbetson). He went to his office one day, and asked the hon. baronet for £40,000 to create a dry dock for Waterford. Within three days the hon. baronet gave him the £40,000 (laughter). His friends in Waterford, however, though the money was granted on the 1st July last, had not yet drawn a shilling of it. That was not the hon. baronet's fault, nor his (the Major's). He was ashamed to say that not a shilling had yet been spent on the dry docks of Waterford (laughter). The hon. baronet might almost appeal to him to restore the money, and might say, ‘What are you about? Why don't you go on with your dry dock?’ (laughter). He could not give any answer to that question. All he could say was that they had a splendid Dock Board, that they met in a very handsome room, and that their secretary had just walked away with £850 (much laughter).”

As a good example of the policy of Obstruction, and as a leading case as to how it was carried on by the Home Rule members in Parliament last session, was the debate raised upon the subject of Mixed Education by Mr. O'Donnell, on 13th March, the result of which was the Government were unable to pass money votes that night. Upon the motion for going into Committee of Supply, Mr. O'Donnell said he had a motion on the paper which he was precluded by the rules of the House from pressing to a division. The subject in effect was the question of Denominational Education for Ireland, though disguised under a general resolution. The House under the influence of Mr. O'Donnell's exceedingly lengthy speech gradually grew thin. But Mr. Parnell was determined to have an audience, and knowing the Government's anxiety for “supply,” interrupted his col-

league, and called attention to the fact that there were not forty members present. The Government whips, hoping Mr. O'Donnell would soon run dry, exerted themselves to keep a house, and the member for Dungarvan proceeded with his historical, critical, and argumentative harangue. But again the House wearied and disappeared, when the same manœuvre was resorted to by Mr. Biggar, and a fresh House of listeners was again procured. Major Nolan, Messrs. Sullivan, Parnell, O'Connor Power, Biggar, and others, all contributed to the debate, which was, taken as a whole, an exhaustive statement of the case for Denominational Education.

On St. Patrick's Day, under the new rule for carrying on business, preventing preliminary discussion when supply is the first order, the House of Commons went into Committee of Supply on the Army Estimates immediately after the questions on the paper had been put and answered. The result was some more achievements in obstruction by the Irish members. Sir Patrick O'Brien, deprecating the idea that he was either an Obstructive or an extreme Nationalist—on the contrary, he was an Imperialist—moved that the vote be reduced by £10,000. His object was to call attention to the fact that there were in the army 34,000 Irishmen and only 15,000 Scotchmen. But while the Scotch had some eighteen or twenty regiments, the Irish had only seven or eight. He should like to see some Regiments of Irish Guards formed. Mr. O'Donnell said he was opposed to such an idea as long as, under a British Government, the duty of Irish Guards would be to coerce the Irish people. This and other subjects of minor importance were discussed at great length, until the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose and complained of the very great waste of time and

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the repetition of arguments. This drew forth a challenge from Mr. Parnell, and a collision seemed imminent. In fact, later on, Mr. Biggar and Lord Elcho had hot words, the former calling Lord Elcho a "Brummagem soldier." After some uproar, the matter dropped, and progress was reported between one and two, a.m. During the debate Mr. Biggar mentioned his opinion that if there was a war between England and Russia, the great majority of Irish people would be glad to see Russia victorious. Thus ended the national festival in the House of Commons.

On the following night at Glasgow Mr. Parnell made a speech, for which an unsuccessful attempt was made to bring him to task by Mr. Beckett-Denison, M.P. As it relates to the policy of the Obstructives, and explains the motives of the debate on the Army Estimates, an extract is here given :—

"With regard to the position of Irishmen in England, they were in the centre of the enemy's camp. They could make themselves felt in schoolboard elections and Parliamentary elections. There would soon be a general election, when they would have the opportunity of doing inestimable service to their country at home. He hoped they would be prepared to take advantage of that opportunity, and act as one man for the good of Ireland. By holding themselves aloof from both the Liberal and Conservative party, by not announcing their intention of voting for one side or another until they had brought both parties to their doors as suppliants for support, they would show their power. Depend upon it the way to get on with an Englishman or a Scotchman was to show him that they had great power. That was the principle upon which some of them were proceeding in the House of Commons; and they had used that power, too, though their numbers might be few. He ventured to think that they gave an example that would not be lost upon Ireland when she got the opportunity of helping herself. They were last night in a great hurry to get money for their army, having a great number of little wars on hand to pay for, and they thought it very unreasonable that some reasonable Irishmen were not in a very great hurry to give them money. There was even some talk of giving the Irishmen a regiment of Royal Irish Guards, and of sending that regiment—

where did the meeting suppose? Over to Dublin? No, but sending that regiment out to Zululand to fight Cetewayo. Perhaps it might not be such a bad experiment after all to let them try if they would equip and send out a regiment of Irish Guards to Zululand. Perhaps that regiment might be found on the wrong side. Well, they did not get the money, at least not as much as they thought themselves entitled to, though they had a big party, and though that party seemed full of fighting. Yet they had some lively recollections of certain nights and days which they passed last session and the session before. So Mr. O'Donnell announced at a quarter to two this morning he was not going to give them any more money just at present; and when Mr. Biggar announced that the majority of the Irish people, at home and abroad, had disapproved of these wars, and that the majority of the Irish people were disaffected, which was true—when these intimations were made, the House of Commons gave up the task of getting any more money."

The result of the obstruction on St. Patrick's Night was remarkable. On the Thursday following, the Chancellor of the Exchequer appealed to those members who had given notice of amendments to the motion of going into Committee of Supply to allow the Supplementary Estimates to be taken first. Unless they were passed that night, the Government might have to violate the Appropriation Act, the consequences of which would be that a bill of indemnity would be necessary. Whereupon at once all members, including even Mr. Biggar, withdrew their motions. Shortly after, Messrs. O'Connor Power and O'Donnell arrived from their oratorical excursions to Liverpool, and Mr. Parnell from Glasgow, eager for the fray, and expecting to be in time for the business just transacted. In revenge for their loss, they organised forthwith an extemporary discussion upon the Parliamentary Elections and Corrupt Practices Bill, on the second reading of which they swelled the minority to the magnificent number of six.

Still determined to monopolise the attention of the

reporters' gallery, the determined band of Irish speakers availed themselves of Mr. Samuelson's action in calling attention to the working of the Agricultural Holdings Act, to fight a pet Irish grievance upon an English subject. Mr. O'Donnell, who had lately lectured on the Land Question before the Radical Association of Southwark, spoke at length, and recommended as a Liberal party cry, "Land Reform and Free Agriculture." He moved an amendment to the effect that— :

"There could be no adequate remedy for the agricultural depression at present existing which did not, especially at this period of foreign competition, protect the application of skill and capital to the soil, by the establishment of compensation for unexhausted improvements, of an equitable appeal against exorbitant rents, and of substantial security of tenure for the agricultural classes both in Great Britain and Ireland."

How great a contrast this motion is to resolutions adopted on the Irish Land Question at the latter end of the year will presently be appreciated.

That Mr. O'Donnell and his associates had as yet no actual policy for a land agitation in Ireland, may be gathered from his letter to the *Freeman*, written on 17th March. In that he foreshadows a gigantic alliance between the Radical Associations in London and the various Tenant Defence Associations and Farmers' Clubs throughout Ireland. A public Conference on the subject in London is proposed about the month of May. A further and General Conference is then projected during the recess in one of the great northern English cities, and the final plans of a great land campaign arranged and decided for carrying the land-reform agitation into the heart of the English counties and the stronghold of landlord power. This was Mr. O'Donnell's scheme

in March, and England, it appears, narrowly escaped the storm which subsequently broke with such extraordinary violence upon the shores of Ireland.

But while on the subject of the Land Question, some notice must be taken of a paper by Mr. Blennerhasset, M.P., upon the subject, read at a meeting of the London Home Rule Club about this time, and dealing especially with the defects of the Land Act of 1870 and the subject of "economic rent." The member for Kerry laid down that two conditions were essential to the commercial treatment of land on competition rents—first, farmers should be capitalists, and second, there should be a variety of other occupations into which farmers, if landlords demanded excessive rents, could turn their capital. The Act of 1870 Mr. Blennerhasset considered a failure, because it had not faced the problem of the regulation of rent. The conditions which made freedom of contract the means of determining the amount of rent did not exist in Ireland. He was convinced that a system which would throw upon the State the responsibility of deciding in a case of a dispute of what was a fair rent, would be of the greatest possible assistance and benefit to the landlords of Ireland.

As a Parliamentary Sir Joseph M'Kenna had always gained the ear of the House of Commons. On the Irish Wednesday (March 26th), in the absence of Mr. P. J. Smyth, in whose custody the measure has been for some years, Sir Joseph carried the second reading of the Bill to effect the repeal of the Irish Convention Act. After some Government opposition and discussion, the Chief Secretary and Attorney-General agreed to the second reading of a fresh Bill to repeal the Act of 1793, and enact only what was requisite to prevent an assembly for

usurping or purporting to discharge the functions of Parliament.

Towards the close of March Major O'Reilly, Home Rule member for Longford, accepted office under Government as Assistant Commissioner under the Irish Intermediate Education Act. Major O'Reilly had been long identified with all questions of education.

The principal events of the month ended by Sir Charles Dilke's motion for a vote of censure on Sir Bartle Frere and the Government, for the inception of the Zulu war. Thirty-two Home Rule members voted in condemnation of the South African policy of the Government, twenty-one were absent from division, and Sir G. Bowyer, Colonel King-Harman, Mr. Owen Lewis, and Mr. G. Morris voted for the Government. But the Home Rule phalanx had already lost one more of its number. Lord Robert Montagu on 28th March wrote a letter, addressed to the Secretaries, withdrawing from the Home Rule party, and it contained the following sentence :—"To be a member of your party is a degradation from which I have for a year and a-half desired publicly to free myself, as I do now."

April commenced in Ireland with the unopposed return of Mr. Justin M'Carthy for County Longford, and the report of the Clare Representation Committee, which decided that Sir Bryan O'Loghlen had vacated his seat by becoming Attorney-General for Victoria. The Attorney-General for Ireland passed his Vaccination Amendment Act through the second reading ; but beyond a few questions asked and answered, the Irish party, up to the Easter recess, remained in a state of quiescence. As a retrospect of the session it may be as well to quote the words of the *Nation's* London correspondent, which gives,

presumably, a fair and impartial view of the Home Rule situation at this crisis :—

“ But what has been done in these two months for Ireland, and how goes the good cause? Scarcely needs to one question, the answer “ Nothing ;” nor to the other, that aught of advance which can be noted has not been made within the walls of Parliament. Once there came a dream on Ireland that she would choose a band of men to charm the old-time foe, and force her ears with strength of passion-music. But the minstrels, as it fell out, were unskilfully sorted, and preferred jigging and fiddling of their own fashion, and this, too, so untunefully, that at last nobody heeded much whether they stopped or whether they played. The inspiring performance of Mr. Shaw on the violoncello, or Sir Joseph on the big drum, assisted by Mr. Callan with the bones, could not attract for ever. Soon we knew every note in their compass, down even to the soothing legend of the score—*andante moderato!* Wherefore, Joe Biggar, thou wert welcomed in the rout, with thy Belfast traditions of that stirring orchestral direction, ‘ Play up Boyne Water softly, just to see if we could stand it.’ The grinding of the Home Rule organ may wax or wane, but when shall we cease to welcome the vigorous shrilling of that Northern note? The session is over to Easter, and how does it profit us? There is no advance, and the Home Rule party will not amend.”

But if the Easter recess brought rest to the English members from the obstructive and oratorical performances of Irish members, it brought no such rest to the Irish public ; for when the Irish agitator is not speaking he is writing, and in Ireland much was done with tongue and pen.

But meanwhile Mr. Butt was sick unto death, and a general feeling began to creep over those who knew him well, which gradually spread to the public generally, that this was to be his last illness. Notwithstanding, agitation of some sort had to be kept up at all hazards, and consequently there was a grand demonstration at Kilnaleck, County Cavan, whereat Messrs. Fay, Biggar, and Parnell spoke. The speeches are useful as affording proof that as far back as April 14th the idea which subsequently

pervaded the Land Agitation out of Parliament had not occurred to the Irish members. Mr. Fay gave his panacea for the Land Question—that each tenant should get a twenty-one years' lease, renewable for ever at every period of twenty-one years, at re-valued rent, provided he could show at the time of each successive renewal that he had paid his rent with reasonable punctuality, and that he kept his farm in the highest state of cultivation that the circumstances of each case would permit. Mr. Parnell spoke these remarkable words, which may be usefully compared with his utterances at Castlerea on December 7th :—

“ They should devote their energies, not to obtain a final settlement of the Land Question—because the final settlement of that question under present circumstances was impossible—but he thought this much was possible, that they might obtain a measure from the present Government which would go a long way towards preventing eviction and unjust raising of rents (cheers). What he believed ought to be the final settlement of the Land Question was the settlement which obtained in France and Belgium, where the man who cultivates the soil is the owner of the soil ; and he looked forward to the time, sooner or later, when by purchasing the interests of the landlords it might be possible for every tenant to be the owner of the farm which he at present occupies as tenant-at-will, or otherwise (cheers). He thought this was a matter that might not come perhaps for many years, but still things were marching very fast in that direction. When this became a burning question in England, they would be near a settlement of it in Ireland.”

On the same day Mr. O'Donnell sat in his chambers in the Temple, and indited a lengthy epistle to the *Freeman's Journal*. Following the failing of every patriot of not allowing anyone to abuse his country except himself, Mr. O'Donnell thus upbraids Ireland :—

“ Imagine a people claiming to extort their recognition as a nation from a great and dominant Imperialism, and with their Home Rule Confederation somewhere in the city, their Parliamentary Party in dingy chambers in a Westminster back street, and their

Land reform agitation nowhere ! Of course Ireland is the root, the centre, the parent, as well as the object of all our exertions. It is our home, our country, our nation. In it are our resources of national life and resolution, our recruiting ground, our force, our leadership. But it is against an English influence that we contend ; it is by British friends against British foes that the whole theory of any effective constitutional agitation counsels us to fortify ourselves. Let the forces be raised in Ireland ; but is not England a battlefield no wise general can overlook ? Let the directing head be in Dublin ; but there must be a strong and skilful hand in England. Let the plans of campaign be settled in Irish assemblies in the Irish capital ; but a large part of the operations must be carried out amid the accidents and opportunities of English political life."

We have it, therefore, on the highest authority, that the Obstructive Land-reform agitation was "nowhere" on the 14th April.

Parliament re-assembled on 17th April, and on the same day was held in Dublin the special meeting of the Central Tenants' Defence Association. The main objects were to consider the condition of the Irish tenant, and to devise a plan of co-operation with the English tenant-farmers, so as to enforce the consideration of the Land Question simultaneously in both countries. The meeting consisted principally of leading political graziers, well known in the agitating world, only two members of Parliament attending, viz., Messrs. Martin, Q.C., and Parnell. The resolutions, moved by Mr. Kettle, of epistolary fame, called upon the landlords to perform their duties, and provide for the people. The next sentences contain the germ of the recent agitations :—

"The landlords are now face to face with the necessity of reducing their rents or of pauperising and starving the people. We deem it well worthy of the consideration of the landlords to see if a policy of concession and preservation might not now be the best even for their own interests. We believe a reduction of rents, amounting in the majority of cases to 25 per cent., is absolutely necessary to preserve the credit of the occupiers, and to enable them to carry on the business of the country even with (largely) reduced expenses

and the most rigid personal industry and economy, and that a plan of united action should be adopted by the tenants to collectively urge this matter upon the attention of the landlords, many of whom are absentees, and know nothing practically about the state of the country."

But it was reserved for a Catholic clergyman to put forward publicly, for the first time, into words the policy which Mr. Parnell has for so long advocated. During the discussion—

"Rev. Father Tormey said that fixity of tenure at fair rents had been the cry that had been raised for nearly thirty years, and he thought it would not be suitable to the exigencies of the present time if they merely fell back upon that old cry. The country was on the brink of ruin, and there must be a loud cry, not addressed to Parliament so much as to society in this country (applause). They knew how slow the business of legislation was (hear, hear). They knew what a cripple England sent with any message of redress to them, and what a winged mercury carried them acts of coercion or oppression (applause). The tenantry of Ireland were now on the very brink of bankruptcy, and now was the time for them to say, 'We will pay no more rent until they are reduced to such a standard as will enable us to live' " (applause).

But at this period these doctrines were thought too strong even by the Central Tenants' Defence Association, and the resolution was amended by the Rev. P. White, of Miltown Malbay, and carried in the following terms :—

"1st. That this meeting affirms the prevalence over the greater part of Ireland of pressing and constantly-increasing distress among the farmers. 2nd. We call upon the farmers to demand an immediate reduction of unfair rents. 3rd. No final settlement of the Land Question can be satisfactory which does not include fixity of tenure at fair rents."

During the discussion Mr. Parnell had remained silent, and in his speech at the end of the meeting he merely spoke against the law of distress as unnecessary, and made a few remarks about the difference between the Irish and English Land Questions. One sentence, how-

ever, was significant. "The English farmer," he said, "was able to live in a better position than the Irish, and he takes for his share in the profits of the farm a very much larger proportion than the Irish. Therefore the Land Question in England would be solved in a different way from the means they must adopt in Ireland." Perhaps the Rev. Mr. Tormey's theory had already taken root in Mr. Parnell's mind.

Directly, upon the re-assembling of Parliament, Mr. O'Donnell repeated a manœuvre we have already described in the debate on Mixed Education, and detained the House with a long discussion on the character of the Queen's College Professoriate. During the recess the Obstructives had evidently devoted their leisure hours to the study of Estimates; hardly an item was allowed to pass without debate, and the letter of Parliamentary law was used in order to defeat the spirit of it.

And now we come to what may be called the first great public demonstration on the Land Question of the year; and the leading movers and speakers engaged in it, give a fair insight into the true origin of the anti-rent agitation. On Sunday, 20th April, a tenants' defence meeting was held in Irishtown, near Claremorris, County Mayo, and attracted an enormous assembly. Mr. James Daly, of Castlebar, proprietor of the *Connaught Telegraph*, the gentleman who was arrested last November for a speech delivered at Gurteen, was in the chair, supported by Mr. O'Connor Power, M.P., Messrs. Louden, Harris, Brennan, and O'Sullivan. The origin and object of the demonstration, Mr. Daly explained, was to demand a reduction of rent. At the last January sessions, Mr. Daly said, a deputation of frieze-coated farmers in the district waited on him, and complained most bitterly of the treat-

ment they were subjected to by some landed proprietors. He asked them to organise a tenant defence meeting, and that was the origin of their coming together. Mr. Thomas Brennan [the last gentleman arrested by the Government for a speech at Balla] proposed the first resolution, which was in the following terms :—

“Whereas the social condition of the Irish people having been reduced, through their subjection to England and its coercive legislation, to a state below that of any civilised country in the world ; and

“Whereas the mouthpiece of English public opinion, when speaking of constitutional misgovernment in late years, having declared that ‘government should be for the good of the governed, and that whatever rules wilfully and persistently postpone the good of their subjects, either in the interests of foreign states, or to assist theories of religion or politics, such rules have thereby forfeited all claim to allegiance ;’ be it therefore

“Resolved—That we, Irishmen, assembled to-day in our thousands, do hereby endorse the foregoing declarations, as embodying the position and wrongs of our misgoverned and impoverished country, and as likewise affording us a justification for recording our unceasing determination to resort to every lawful means, compatible with an outraged civilised people, whereby our inalienable rights—political and social—can be regained from their enemies.”

In the course of his remarks Mr. Brennan said he believed it was the masses of the people more than Parliamentary representatives who would do the most for Irish liberty. “I will go further,” he continued, “and say I believe it is not on the floor of the House of Commons, but on Irish soil that the real struggle for independence must be fought. But, as Irish Nationalists, we should be glad to see the enemies of liberty obstructed and harassed, no matter where, or by whom, whether it be in Westminster or Zululand, whether the attacking party be commanded by a Parnell or a Cetewayo.” A voice here called for three cheers, for Cetewayo. Mr. O’Sullivan, following the lead of his comrade, said that

they must not send into Parliament men like The O'Connor Don (groans) and the Hon. Charles French (groans), "or any other wretched, miserable aristocrat, but men sprung from the people."

Mr. Ferguson, of Glasgow, proposed a resolution on the Land Question, which is also given in full, to the effect :—

"That as the land of Ireland, like that of every other country, was intended by a just and all-providing God for the use and sustenance of those of His people to whom He gave inclination and energies to cultivate and improve it, any system which sanctions its monopoly by a privileged and non-operative class, or assigns its ownership and control to a landlord caste, to be used as an instrument of usurious or political self-seeking, demands from every aggrieved Irishman an undying hostility, being flagrantly opposed to the first principle of their humanity—self-preservation."

Mr. Ferguson supplemented this resolution by a long speech, but it is unnecessary to give any further extracts. The speaking was concluded by Mr. O'Connor Power, M.P., who declared that every cross road, every market place, and every chapel yard in Mayo should be dedicated to the formation and the manifestation of a sound and honest public opinion—a proposition which may be usefully compared with the advice of the Fenian, John Devoy, on the same subject. (Appendix A.)

After this excursion to the West of Ireland platform, we must return to Parliament, where unanimity of a different kind had been displayed on the subject of the Registration of Irish Voters. Mr. Meldon, Q.C., moved, on April 23rd, the second reading of the Bill which provided for the assimilation of the English and Irish law, and for the prevention of frivolous and groundless objections to claims of the franchise. It passed the second stage, but was subsequently dropped.

On the same day the Ulster Tenant-Right Bill came on for second reading, moved by Mr. Macartney, and supported by the late Mr. Wilson. These gentlemen proposed to transfer from the tenant to the landlord the burden of proof as to the prevalence or non-prevalence of tenant-right custom; to restrict, if not to abolish, the estate office rules by which the custom may be impaired; and to enact that the possession of a lease does not abolish the tenant-right which would attach to a farm, had no lease existed. These propositions were decisively rejected on a division.

On May 2nd an important debate took place in the House upon a "peasant proprietary for Ireland." Mr. Shaw Lefevre brought forward his motion for the amendment of the Bright Clauses of the Land Act, which was as follows :—

"To call attention to the evidence and report of the Committee on the Purchase Clauses of the Irish Land Act; and to move that, in view of the importance of a considerable addition to the number of owners of land in Ireland among the class of persons cultivating its soil, it is expedient that legislation should be adopted, without further delay, for increasing the facilities proposed with this object by the Irish Land Act, 1870, and for securing to the tenants of land offered for sale the opportunity of purchase, consistently with interests of the owners thereof."

After a long debate, with a general unanimity of opinion as to the value of the Bright Clauses, the resolution was agreed to.

While the question of a peasant proprietary was before Parliament, while candidates were busy addressing the electors of Clare, and while the very types of agitation and obstruction which he hated so bitterly were reaching their height, Isaac Butt was gradually passing away. Whether or not the stormy meeting of the Home Rule

League, where he was so cruelly impeached and so wantonly insulted, following on six months of anxiety and annoyance, was the last blow which broke the great man's heart will never now be known. It was certainly his last appearance as a political leader in Ireland. Body and spirit both failed him from that time forth, and on May 5th one of the brightest ornaments of the Irish Bar, one whose name will live long after his voice is silent, departed for ever from the scenes of his professional and political careers.

It was only two days after Mr. Butt's death that Mr. O'Clery's Bill for the establishment of a Volunteer Corps in Ireland was successfully carried to a second reading. Mr. Plunket opposed the measure strenuously. He complained that the members who urged the expediency of accepting the measure on the ground of the loyalty of the Irish, were those who, outside the House, had delivered speeches in favour of the Zulus, and had uttered sentiments which fell very little short of treason. He wished to know in which of these cases members desired to be taken at their word. It would be a good thing if members, in consideration of the passing of the Bill, were to give up the luxury of talking treason.

The Irish Executive was treated with scant ceremony on the 12th May, when some of the Irish Estimates were brought forward. The salaries of two gentlemen-at-large were challenged, and the number of aides-de-camp on the Viceregal staff, Major O'Beirne complained, was larger than that of the Viceroy of India. An unexpected champion turned up in Mr. Henry, who said the functions of the Irish Viceroy were partly to keep up the social dignity of the capital, and to influence the female mind.

One of the most important private bills of the session,

from an Irish point of view, was Mr. Butt's Land Bill, which sought to extend to the whole of Ireland the Tenant-right of Ulster. The second reading was moved by Mr. Shaw on 14th May, and rejected by a majority of 172.

Next evening The O'Connor Don obtained his opportunity of bringing forward the new Irish University Bill. After a lengthy discussion, the debate was adjourned, the Chancellor of the Exchequer promising an opportunity for its thorough discussion.

In Clare meanwhile a triangular battle was going on between Whig, Tory, and Home Ruler, in which The O'Gorman Mahon headed the poll by 130; Captain Vandeleur (C.) being far ahead of Mr. Peter O'Brien (L.)

The O'Connor Don, referring to the adjournment of the debate upon his University Bill on 22nd May, asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer to provide a day for the resumption of the discussion. This the Chancellor refused to do, and accordingly Mr. Shaw, to express his surprise and regret at the action of Government, moved the adjournment of the House. Mr. A. M. Sullivan followed in a speech, which was loudly cheered from the Home Rule Benches, and in which he alleged that the Government had entered into semi-official negotiations with the Catholic authorities in December, and that when he had heard the circumstance he warned The O'Connor Don that they had done so only to delude the Irish people. At a meeting of the Home Rule party the same night Mr. Shaw was appointed Chairman for the session, in place of Mr. Butt.

On the motion for adjournment, May 27th, of the House for the Whitsuntide recess, Mr. O'Donnell took

the opportunity of calling attention to the "deplorable and unendurable condition of the landed interest in Ireland. If that was to continue much longer, he said, Parliament would have to solve a greater problem than that which startled them a few years ago, when the whisper of liberty reached Ireland from the other side of the Atlantic." In this manner Mr. O'Donnell kept himself *en rapport* with his ex-Fenian associates out of Parliament, and gave the first threatening note of what was to come in the autumn recess. He was ably seconded by Mr. O'Connor Power. That gentleman said :—

"The patience of the Irish people was entirely exhausted, and if Parliament did not come forward within a reasonable time with some measure of legislation calculated to relieve the depression of the present state of agriculture in Ireland scenes would arise in Ireland that would be far more dangerous to the rights of property and to the order and tranquillity which should prevail in that country than any that Ireland had been afflicted with in her long struggle with the ignorance, if not the incompetence, of the English Parliament. If these warnings were unheeded, and Parliament should plead for further delay, the consequences must be fixed on their own shoulders." (hear, hear.)

If the American proverb that a man is a fool who prophesies *unless he knows* be true in the case of Mr. O'Donnell and Mr. O'C. Power, the result of these gentlemen's prognostications as to the future state of Ireland would lead to obvious conclusions. These last utterances of Messrs. O'Donnell and Power may be called for convenience their ultimatum, and as such will be referred to. As an example of the style of National Press letterpress in Dublin at this time, and its view of obstruction, the following extract from the *Nation* will suffice :—

"In the House the Irish popular members, or rather such of them as attend to their Parliamentary duties, have been more than usually active since the debate on Wednesday week on the University Bill,

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The conduct of the Government on that occasion, and its refusal the following day to give a day for the resumption of the debate, seem to have opened their eyes to the fact that the time has come for putting pressure on Ministers, if they mean to obtain any concessions at all this session. Accordingly, they have been making things generally inconvenient to the Government. Mr. Shaw, Mr. A. M. Sullivan, Mr. O'Donnell, Mr. O'Connor Power, and others, unexpectedly interposed on Thursday week with unusually outspoken denunciations of the treatment to which The O'Connor Don's Bill had been subjected by Sir Stafford Northcote, and thereby spoiled to a great extent the stated business of the House for that evening. Mr. Kirk, Mr. Sullivan, and Mr. Parnell followed the next day with a discussion of the Dowth case. On Monday, besides attending to the Zulu question, as noticed above, Mr. Parnell, Mr. Mitchell Henry, and others tackled the estimates with considerable success, defeating amongst other things the project of passing the Scotch denominational education votes without ample discussion. Finally, on Tuesday the agricultural depression in Ireland was the subject of a lengthened discussion, in which Mr. O'Donnell, Mr. A. M. Sullivan, Mr. M. Henry, Mr. Justin MacCarthy, and Mr. Parnell participated. In all those encounters with the enemy the Home Rulers did not gain all they aimed at, but they did succeed in obstructing, delaying, and deranging the business of the House, and that in itself is no unimportant achievement. Let us hope that it will be frequently repeated when Parliament, which has adjourned for the Whitsuntide recess, shall have reassembled."

Mr. Butt's constituency, known as the City of the Violated Treaty, in the election of a new member proved true to its Home Rule opinions, and the Limerick electors seated Mr. D. Gabbett by 860 votes, against 658 recorded for Mr. Spaight (C.)

During the Whitsuntide recess the O'Connor Don's University Bill became the subject of considerable agitation. In Birmingham the Nonconformists, and in Belfast the Queen's University graduates, denounced the measure, while to counterbalance these secularist demonstrations a declaration in favour of the Bill was promulgated, and largely signed by the Irish Catholic laity.

Meanwhile the Convention Act was disappearing from the Statute Book ; it passed without discussion through

the House of Commons, and not long after it reached a second reading in the Lords, after a short speech from Lord O'Hagan.

The ultimatum of Messrs. O'Donnell and O'Connor Power on the 27th May, which we have given in full, was speedily followed by one of those scenes alluded to by Mr. Power, which were to form the new Irish problem for English statesmen.

The Question of Rents was first publicly raised by demonstration at Westport on Sunday, 8th June, and it was on this occasion that Mr. Parnell seems finally to have adopted the policy recommended at the commencement of the year by the Fenian Devoy (see Appendix), and threatened in the ultimatum of Messrs. O'Connor Power and O'Donnell.

Here Mr. Parnell first advised the tenants to keep a firm grip of their lands. Here we first read of banners bearing the mottoes, "The Land for the People," "Down with the Land Robbers," "Ireland for the Irish," etc. The local *personnel* are the same as on the former occasion at Irishtown, when Mr. James Daly, of the *Con-naught Telegraph*, took the chair. But there is one other present, hitherto silent, though always at work, who from henceforward was to take a prominent place in the Land Agitation throughout the West of Ireland—the ex-political prisoner, Michael Davitt. But on this occasion Davitt's speech was somewhat indefinite, but darkly significant and threatening. He said English members showed sympathy with Ireland and paid attention to Irish questions simply because Mr. Parnell had succeeded in blocking the machinery of the English House of Commons. "They were there," he continued, "to denounce the landlord system, which was like a millstone around

the neck of Ireland. The landlords were only filling the place of a territorial garrison. The people should depend upon themselves, not their representatives, to settle the Land Question. If they resolved that they would organise and combine to defend each other in their interests, then they would find the Land Question settled within a shorter time than was used in useless legislation." Mr. Parnell declared that "if the landlords could be purchased out, as in Prussia, it would be a final settlement of the question." "But in the meanwhile," he continued, "it is necessary to ensure that as long as the tenant pays a fair rent, he shall be left to enjoy the fruits of his industry. A fair rent is a rent the tenant can reasonably pay according to the times, but in bad times a tenant cannot be expected to pay as much as he did in good times three or four years ago. Now what must we do in order to induce the landlords to see the position? You must show the landlords that you intend to hold a firm grip of your homesteads and lands. You must not allow yourself to be dispossessed." Such was the first enunciation by Mr. Parnell of the policy recommended by the Rev. Mr. Tormey at the Central Tenants' Defence Association in Dublin, on 17th April.

What was thought of this meeting by a very high ecclesiastical authority may be gathered by the letter on the subject, here reproduced, from the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam:—

"To the Editor of the Freeman."

Westport, June 5.

"DEAR SIR,—In a telegraphic message exhibited towards the end of last week in a public room of this town, an Irish member of Parliament has unwittingly expressed his readiness to attend a meeting, convened in a mysterious and disorderly manner, which is to

be held, it seems, in Westport on Sunday next. Of the sympathy of the Catholic clergy for the rack-rented tenantry of Ireland and of their willingness to co-operate earnestly in redressing their grievances abundant evidence exists in historic Mayo as elsewhere. But night-patrolling, acts and words of menace with arms in hand, the profanation of what is most sacred in religion—all the result of lawless and occult association—eminently merit the solemn condemnation of the ministers of religion, as directly tending to impiety and disorder in Church and in society. Against such combinations in this diocese, organised by a few designing men, who, instead of the well-being of the community, seek only to promote their personal interests, the faithful clergy will not fail to raise their warning voices, and to point out to the people that unhallowed combinations lead invariably to disaster and to the firmer riveting of the chains by which we are unhappily bound as a subordinate people to a dominant race.

“I remain, dear sir, faithfully yours,

“✠ JOHN, Archbishop of Tuam.”

While, however, Mr. Parnell and Michael Davitt were busy plucking the first fruits of a communistic agitation in Mayo, the Obstructive members in London had organised a second campaign against the business of the House, and inaugurated a new and scientific policy of obstruction. To co-operate in this, the member for Meath travelled night and day to the House of Commons, arriving on June 9th. The system was the same as that adopted on previous occasions, but suspended for some time during the University Bill Question. Finding now that the hope of their gains was gone, the Three commenced once more to criticise minutely the business brought before the House, and the result was that very little business was transacted. The same thing happened on the following night, and the English Press were loud and bitter in their denunciations of the Irish members. The *Standard* remarked “the special feature of the present policy is to profess anxiety to adhere to the rules of

the House, while actually interposing obstacles in the way of business being proceeded with." The *Telegraph* also noted the new phase of obstruction:—"They do not openly obstruct the business of the House; they only insist that the work before Parliament shall be executed with minute exactitude and elaborate care." Again the *Telegraph* puts the dilemma of obstruction most forcibly:—

"The difficulty in meeting this obstacle to anything like fairly rapid legislation is, that these Irish gentlemen can plead with truth the rights of members of the House to devote any time they choose to every vote in the estimates, and every clause of every bill. Some of them are clever orators, and nearly all are fluent speakers. With the library of the House at their command, and armed with Blue Books, they can soon acquire sufficient information to make relevant remarks on any topic. But a few 'relevant remarks' on every question arising out of the votes and the new bills laid on the table, means, if adopted generally, a session lasting the whole year. In theory the House of Commons has a right to examine details, but in practice it never goes through estimates or new measures item by item; and if it did, the business of the country could never be carried on. The practically unrestrained liberty of our members of Parliament is based on the understanding that they will reasonably 'forbear their own advantage.' There is no rule restricting the length of speeches; a member may speak for ten hours if he likes, and even if the House refuses to hear him, he may still continue to occupy the floor when once he has begun. There is nothing to prevent the proposal of a hundred amendments to every clause of every bill. A question may be asked, and a commentary made, and a division taken, on every item, however small, of the estimates.

"Old and commendable English system of political warfare has been changed; and in imitation of newer and less happy Parliaments a third party has been formed in the House. The English gentlemen who serve under Lord Hartington still obey the honourable traditions, and, a little Radical restiveness excepted, fulfil the ideals of the olden time. The Home Rulers, however, have not only invented an independent Opposition, but are unfortunately beyond the pale of our public opinion. Were a body of British representatives to behave in the same way we might appeal—and probably not in vain—to the patriotic feelings of their constituencies; but most of the Irish electors take comparatively little interest in the proceedings of the legislature, and consequently their members 'have as free a charter as the wind.' They are sent to West-

minster to do as they please ; but what is sport to them is death to legislation."

As a contrast to this we give the views of the organ and advocate of obstruction, viz., the *Nation*. No comment is necessary :—

" The representatives of a distinct nationality which England is vainly trying to suppress, have been dragged into the English Parliament, and they do not feel bound to conform to 'the English system of political warfare;' they decline to fuse themselves into either of 'the great English parties,' they prefer to stand aloof from both ; they have no interest in the orderly and rapid transaction of English business ; 'the dignity of the House' is no concern of theirs ; they desire to recover for their own country its native Parliament, which England foully destroyed ; they seek to bring into prominence the fact that the British Parliament has loaded itself with more work than it can satisfactorily perform, and they want to prove to that assembly that its own comfort and convenience would be promoted by making 'a division of labour.' Moreover, those men ask for their country the redress of long-standing grievances, and their requests are spurned ; they strive to obtain some small instalments of justice long denied, and their endeavours are brutally overborne and defeated. Then why should they give willing aid to the working of the British Parliamentary machine? Why should they assent to the hurried and imperfect performance of a great mass of the business which the British Parliament undertakes to do? Why should they favour the schemes, lighten the labours, and gratify the feelings of British Ministers? They are under no obligation to do anything of the sort. Their country is delighted to see them doing the very contrary. For many a long and weary year has the English House of Commons been thwarting the will, crushing the hopes, spurning the demands, and impeding the progress of the Irish nation ; and that being so, it can hardly be wondered at if there is joy in Ireland over the allegation that a number of Irishmen have found out a way of thwarting, impeding, perplexing, and oppressing the English House of Commons."

That Obstruction in the month of June had obtained absolute scientific perfection, is manifest by a statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer :—

"We have," said Sir Stafford Northcote a few days since, "brought in, on the part of the Government, no fewer than 28 Bills, all of which are now before the House. Of these a great number—14—have not passed the second reading, and upon seven of those the Speaker has not been moved out of the chair, and five

are in committee, and have to be considered on report. Of the five in committee the Valuation Bill has 112 clauses, and at the present time is on Clause 6, while the Army Bill, which contains 180 clauses, has only reached Clause 44. So much for the Bills. Then with regard to Supply, we have had only two votes out of 26 on the Army Estimates, and we have also only got two votes out of 80 for the Navy Estimates, and 71 out of 142 on the Civil Service Estimates."

We must desert Parliament for a brief period, and once more seek the National platform in the West. On June 13, a meeting of the Home Rule League in Dublin publicly approved of the choice of Mr. Shaw as the leader of the Home Rule Party in Parliament

But how little influence the *imprimatur* of the League had upon the promoters of the new phase of the Land agitation will be seen. Indeed, the attention of the public was fixed with a sensation of unpleasant surprise upon the promoters of the anti-rent movement. It was a new and startling thing to see large numbers of one class of the people pledging themselves to make common cause against another class. The meetings at Irishtown and Westport were dangerous precedents, and the speeches delivered full of ominous import; but another demonstration at Milltown, County Galway, took place on June 15th, at which language of a still worse character was made use of, and a feeling of public alarm and surprise became palpably visible. Had steps been taken at this juncture, perhaps the plot of arousing the country might have been scotched. It is, however, easy after the event to point to the exact time for action. The leaders at the Milltown meeting were Messrs. Daly, Davitt, Brennan, and O'Sullivan. Mr. Arthur Morris, in opening the proceedings, remarked that if they could get an Act passed to the effect that the landlords should live upon Indian meal until they granted a reduction of rent, they would

not be long before such a reduction would be granted. The first resolution was proposed by Mr. Brennan, the gentleman lately arrested, and was in favour of self-government. "The speech of the day," he said, "the most eloquent and significant speech, was not anything that would be said from that platform, but it was the tramp of the mighty multitude of earnest and determined men whom they saw marching there that day. They were determined to keep a grip of their homesteads, and the people of Galway and Mayo might well be congratulated on being the first to accept the true gospel of the Land Question. They declared that the land belongs to the man who cultivates it, and not to the vampire landlord, who spends it in the gay capitals of Europe. They met that day not to talk of twenty-one years' leases; they were there in open insurrection against landlords. Let them continue to be as faithful as the 300 Spartans who fell at Thermopylæ, as the three brave Romans who kept the bridge, faithful as the three brave Irishmen who, with the words 'God save Ireland' on their lips, met a glorious doom at Manchester." Mr. O'Sullivan spoke next, and was interrupted by such expressions as "three cheers for the French Revolution," "three cheers for the Irish Republic," "three cheers for the Zulus and King Cetewayo." Mr. O'Sullivan remarked they did well to cheer for the Zulus, and went on to express a desire for a national army to guard the national independence. The resolution on the Land Question was moved by Mr. Davitt. He said he was not the advocate of strong language; he told them not to be satisfied with cheers or resolutions, but to resolve on putting into action those resolutions whenever they found a fitting opportunity. He repudiated the Home Rule League, and denied that Mr. Shaw or Mr. Henry ever identified themselves

with the National cause, or represented the aspirations of the Irish people. Mr. Davitt concluded in the following words:—

“He would advise the tenant-farmers to feed themselves and their children, to live comfortably and decently, to keep their cabins neat, and send their children to school, and if there was sufficient left, to pay the landlords the rents they demand. Let the landlords turn them out of their homes if they would at the point of the bayonet, and a spirit would spring up in Ireland that would be the destruction of landlords for ever (cheers). They dared them. He urged them to organise. What had organisation done for Ireland? and they said the organisation to which he had the honour to belong—the Fenian organisation (loud and prolonged cheers)—they said that that organisation disestablished the Irish Church. So said Mr. Gladstone.* Well, an organisation of the tenant-farmers would disestablish the landlords in half the time (cheers). In conclusion, Mr. Davitt counselled them to agitate, and said he did not look to the House of Commons for a settlement of this question, but to the perseverance of the Irish people on Irish soil.”

Two days after this convention of land agitators was held in the West of Ireland, on June 17th the Irish Convention Act was repealed. It was looked upon as a useless legal instrument, and accordingly dismissed from the schedule of Government weapons. The *Nation* remarked upon the subject, that it would prove to be an Act of Emancipation to political life in Ireland. Hitherto it had been a “dead weight and stumbling-block to agitation.” Now its repeal will remove “some cumbrous and disabling fetters which hung around the limbs of the Irish people, and will afford facilities for organized expression of Irish opinion to an extent unknown since 1793.” A strange contrast these words to Lord O’Hagan’s

* Mr. Gladstone, replying to Mr. Ferguson, of Glasgow, 11th December, 1879, and refusing to take the Home Rule pledge, said:—“You are mistaken in supposing that the outrages in Manchester and Clerkenwell dominated or affected my action with regard to Ireland. They drew the attention of the public, on which there are so many demands, to Irish questions, and thereby enabled me, in point of time, to act in a manner for which I had previously declared my desire.”

remarks on the same subject in the House of Lords :—
“Parliament no longer fears assumption of its powers or usurpation of its functions, and against any possible assault upon the common law, the law of the land gives ample security. The Bill has outlived the circumstances which gave it birth, and any justification for maintaining it which they afforded.” The events which have occurred since midsummer have certainly had the effect which Lord O’Hagan predicted; the law of the land has had to intervene to prevent the assaults upon the law, the dangers of which had, according to Lord O’Hagan, entirely disappeared.

During the whole of June, and, in fact, to be particular, after the threatening ultimatum of Messrs. O’Donnell and Power on the 27th, the various Associations throughout the country broke forth into a chorus of resolutions. At Waterford and Nenagh, at Mallow, and at Clare; at Knock, County Mayo, where there was a remarkable outburst of indignation against the Catholic Archdeacon Kavanagh for his expressions against the new departure in the Land agitation; at Thurles, Bailieborough, and Kilkenny; at Castlebar, Ballinasloe, and Claremorris, the various Farmers’ Clubs met and passed a series of resolutions, all more or less in the same strain.

A curious incident occurred in Parliament after the Milltown demonstration, which was labelled indignantly by the *Nation* as Mr. Callan’s stroke at the tenant-right agitation, and is a pleasing proof of the unanimity of the Home Rule Party at this particular juncture.

On June 23rd the member for Dundalk asked Mr. Lowther whether the persons who were most prominent at the recent meeting at Milltown had themselves any connexion with the district in which the meeting was held or with the land. Mr. Lowther’s reply was that they

had not. The answer shed some significant light upon the origin of the meeting in question.

June ended with two remarkable events—an extraordinary scene in the House of Commons and the introduction by Government of an Irish University Bill in the House of Lords. The first was the upshot of a question asked of Mr. Lowther by Mr. O'Connor Power *apropos* of the Milltown meeting and Mr. Callan's query. The member for Mayo wished to know whether the Irish Secretary had any authority for his belief, stated to Mr. Callan, that the persons who took part in the Milltown meeting were not tenant-farmers, and were not connected with the neighbourhood, Mr. Lowther not only confirmed his previous reply, but went further, and said, "The first resolution was moved by a clerk in a commercial firm in Dublin, and seconded by a person described as a discharged schoolmaster. Another resolution was proposed by a convict at large on a ticket-of-leave, and seconded by the representative of a local newspaper." The answer was given at a quarter to five, and attended with loud laughter from the ministerial side of the House. But this answer kept the House in a state of confusion until seven o'clock. Mr. Power at once sprung to his feet, defiantly moved the adjournment of the House, and proceeded to make a violent tirade against English rule. Irritated by the rhetorical force of Mr. Power's adjectives, the House took to loud conversation, then a hubbub arose, so that the Speaker's voice could scarcely be heard, groaning, coughing, and laughing were in turn resorted to, but in vain. The result was that in their anger several Ministerial supporters, in attempting to interrupt, became out of order. The Chancellor of the Exchequer himself could obtain no hearing until the Speaker had

thrice asserted his authority, and then it was discovered the Chancellor was himself out of order. Meanwhile Mr. Power went on. Once, on a point of order, the Speaker said, "Though not strictly out of order, I have pointed out the great inconvenience, if not irregularity, of the proceedings now taking place." But rules and regulations, etiquette and good taste, were alike lost on the member of Mayo, and, from his unruly conduct, arose one of the most violent scenes ever witnessed in the House of Commons. Messrs. Parnell, O'Donnell, Sullivan, and Henry, assisted by Mr. John Bright, all took part in the discussion, which ended in proving that the Obstructives, in knowledge of sharp Parliamentary practice, had outwitted their opponents.

The rest of the business of the last part of June consisted chiefly of endless discussions on the Army Bill, to the clauses of which, in pursuance of their policy, the Obstructives moved innumerable amendments, delaying the measure in a most unprecedented manner.

The state of the Irish Parliamentary Party, *alias* Home Rulers, at the end of June, could not have been very flourishing, when we find Mr. Henry giving notice, at a finance meeting, that no defaulter should be at liberty to attend any meetings in future, or vote on any question, and that no gentleman in arrear of his subscription should any longer be considered a member of the party. It was doubtless a comfort to the defaulters pointed at, that, powerless in the little *imperium in imperio* of King Street, they had still left to them the privilege of voting in the House of Commons.

Early in July meetings throughout Ireland continued to be held, at which reductions of rents were demanded as a right. At Skehanagh in Galway, at Ballyhaunis in

Mayo, at Ballinlough in Roscommon, at Thurles, at Clifden, Claremorris, and Ballyvaughan, the same species of resolutions were brought forward and passed, while the clergy of Ossory confined themselves to calling for aid from the Government. In Parliament, for the first week in July, the House of Lords had been busy with the second reading of the University Bill. The Irish peers who opposed it were Lord Leitrim, Lord Inchiquin, Lord Donoughmore, and Lord Powerscourt, the latter of whom expressed his opinion that a Catholic endowment was the proper solution of the problem. The House of Commons was once more for a whole week subjected to a series of violent scenes upon the Army Bill, for which the Obstructives were almost entirely responsible. The great "cat"-contention was the leading feature of the numerous discussions upon the measure—the result of which was that Colonel Stanley announced that the Government had made up its mind to confine flogging in the army in future to cases punishable by death.

On 10th July another storm burst over the House of Commons. The business in course of progress was a Committee on the Army Discipline Bill, when suddenly a cry of privilege was raised, and the Speaker was sent for hurriedly. What followed is admirably described by a correspondent of the *Irish Times*, and as the matter is one of historic interest, the account published by that journal is here given :—

"The Sergeant-at-Arms placed the mace upon the table, and the Speaker took his seat. Mr. A. M. Sullivan, in a calm and respectful speech, called attention to the fact that a stranger was then seated and had been seated in one of the side galleries of the private members taking notes, these notes bearing on the action and proceedings of members belonging to a specific section of that House—the Irish

members, to wit. So far the House was interested, but in no way excited. Up rose Mr. Callan, and, after his manner, narrated his part in the affair. Suddenly the Speaker sprung a mine under the benches below the gangway, when he took upon his own shoulders the whole responsibility for the presence in the galleries of him whom Mr. Callan called this 'obnoxious person.' The Ministerialists thereupon rent the air with cheer after cheer. But the Irish members, recovering from their first surprise, occasioned by the grim audacity of the Speaker, clearly betrayed an indisposition to accept the explanation of Mr. Speaker. Mr. Sullivan spoke from the front Opposition bench, below the gangway, where he was joined by Mr. Parnell, who looked pale and reckless. After a little confusion and a great deal of noise, Mr. O'Connor Power rose, and, in his peculiarly sarcastic manner, coolly asked the Speaker to name the motives with which he had these notes taken. Mr. Speaker said they were taken for his own information. But Mr. O'Connor Power was not satisfied. He openly disputed the right of the Speaker to distribute strangers in the places of hon. members. Ministerialists interposed with loud and angry cries of 'Order.' But the more the House cried 'Order,' the more Mr. O'Connor Power persisted in disputing the authority of the chair. Again the Speaker rose, but not this time with his customary slow and measured demeanour. He almost jumped. Anyhow it will go down to history that Mr. Brand jumped up, and speaking with something akin to acerbity, rebuked Mr. O'Connor Power, declined to make any answer to that gentleman's question, and, sweeping round with dignity, deliberately left the chair and walked from the House, followed by the cries of the member for Mayo, who literally shrieked, 'Mr. Speaker, I protest, sir; I say I protest.' A dead silence fell upon the House, in the midst of which the voice of Mr. Raikes was heard directing the Committee (we were in Committee now) to 'clause 167, page 1,000,' &c. The sound had a most ludicrous effect, and Mr. O'Connor Power responded to it by moving to report progress, that the conduct of the Speaker might be impugned. The row now became almost serious. Lord Hartington endeavoured to make peace, but Mr. Parnell took up the issue, and made a furious onslaught upon the whole proceeding, censuring the conduct of the Speaker, and twitting the Marquis of Hartington upon again throwing in his voice with the Treasury Bench. The discussion now took a new turn, and Mr. Parnell protested against the Committee sitting when a question 'impugning the conduct of the Speaker' was before the House. He asked that the Speaker should be called in, so that his conduct might be discussed. Ultimately it was resolved to defer that duty until to-morrow. Meanwhile, what was to be done with the obnoxious person, the innocent cause of all this commotion? All this time a young gentleman had been seated in the gallery, to the left of the Speaker's chair. Would an order be

given for his withdrawal? That was the question now before the House, and to this Mr. Parnell, Mr. Callan, and Mr. O'Connor Power directed their attention. Whether by order or accident is not certain, but the young gentleman disappeared suddenly. The motion to report progress was therefore withdrawn, and we proceeded to discuss 'Clause 167, page 1000.' While hon. members rushed out to dine, suddenly there was a commotion along the front Opposition bench below the gangway, for Mr. Callan, on turning round to take up his hat, had seen the offending stranger deliberately taking notes in another part of the gallery. Mr. Gray thereupon made a motion to report progress, and Mr. Sullivan said that every time he saw that young gentleman in the gallery he should 'espy strangers,' and have the House cleared. Happily an 'understanding' was come to. Mr. Gray's motion was negatived, and the Committee continued. The episode is quite without example in modern Parliamentary experience, the shouting, yelling, and angry gesticulations reducing the sedate House of Commons to a veritable pandemonium."

After this scene in the House, and much further obstruction on the Army Bill, the *Freeman's Journal*, the proprietor of which was and is Mr. E. D. Gray, M.P., seems to have become frightened at the attitude of the "active" section of the Home Rule Party. We find in its columns of 14th July a leading article urging the exasperators to abandon their tactics, lest they might be suspended or expelled from Parliament. The answer was telegraphic, and in these terms to the Editor:—

"House of Commons, Monday.

"We deeply regret your article on Army Bill, obviously founded on erroneous information, calculated to endorse current misrepresentations and to encourage inactivity. Lord Hartington's confession to-day of necessity of withdrawing local legislation from an over-weighted Parliament, proves what might be achieved by united and energetic action.

"C. S. PARNELL,

"J. G. BIGGAR,

"F. H. O'DONNELL."

It was war to the knife, and there was evidently no hope of gaining any influence over the "three" either through friend or foe.

Once more to the platform. A meeting, very different indeed in character to those in the West of Ireland, was held at Borrisoleigh on July 13th. The Tipperary agitation for a reduction of rates was put solely on the agricultural depression, and the resolutions and appeals made by the clergy on the occasion were comparatively moderate and logical. On the same day, however, at Claremorris a demonstration of the anti-landlord and anti-rent description was carried out under the auspices of Messrs. Davitt, Loudon, and Dillon. All these gentlemen made inflammatory speeches. Mr. Loudon, however, had a difference with the Chairman, Rev. Canon Ulick J. Bourke, P.P., which has some significance. In the course of his remarks, Mr. Loudon said that they were not without allies, for they had the English democracy at their back. At this point the Chairman interfered, and said—

“As Chairman I am bound to listen to all that has been said; but there are two propositions which have been uttered by Mr. Loudon to which, as Chairman, I must necessarily object. One was that we unite with the democracy of England. I hope we never shall. We are a religious people. We never have united with the English people, particularly with the democracy, and I hope we never shall (loud applause). The other proposition he made was, that he hoped no landlord would be sent to the English Parliament (cries of ‘Never’).”

Mr. Daly—“Never. Nothing——”

The Chairman—“Well, then, if that proposition is true, Mr. Parnell ought not to be sent to Parliament (loud cheers for Parnell). I am only exemplifying the fact, that if you take the proposition generally, you should not send Mr. Parnell or Mr. Biggar, who is a Whig also.”

Mr. Daly—“He is no Whig.”

The Chairman—“There must be exceptions made, and it is only on that sense that the proposition should not be general I make that remark” (cheers).

A Voice—“No landlord in Mayo.”

Mr. Loudon—“My friends, a rather unusual course had been taken (cries of ‘Spoken,’ cheers, and noise) by our respected Chair-

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man in making an exception to two remarks which I made to you. One of these remarks had reference to the aid—the moral aid—which you are now receiving, and which the people of Ireland are receiving, from the Radical party in England (cheers). When I made that remark to you, I had in view those banished brothers of yours, the 'Exiles of Erin' (applause), who in a foreign land are trying to assert the glory and the grandeur of their race; I had in view those patriotic bodies, the Home Rule Associations through all the great centres, and the Home Rule Confederation of Scotland, presided over by Mr. John Ferguson (cheers), who came to the Milltown meeting when the people had not the courage they have to-day."

Mr. Davitt made a remarkably frank speech, in which the following sentences occurred:—

"They were assembled, he said, to advocate every plank of the platform laid down at the Irishtown, Westport, and Milltown meetings. They had been told that inflammatory language had been used at previous meetings; but he asked the Government to point to any outrages that had resulted from it. They had been called 'Communists' and 'Fenians' because they asked the right to live in Ireland; but they might retaliate, and ask what right landlords have to the soil, and they would find it very difficult to get convincing proofs from Lord Sligo, Lord Lucan, Sir Roger Palmer, or Lord Oranmore (groans). They had been up to this too moderate. They had simply asked for a reduction of rents which it was utterly impossible for them to pay. John Stuart Mill said rent was the surplus of the profits that came from the tenant's industry and outlay in tilling the soil. Where was this surplus of profits in Ireland to-day? In face of the depreciation of produce and large importations from America, he did not say they were justified in paying no rent at all, but he did not say that a time might not come when they would have to make a protest as a nation against paying salary to a caste in Ireland that were fulfilling the duties of a landlord garrison (applause). The old cry of 'Fixity of tenure at fair rents' would do no longer. They must tell the English Legislature that the concession they gave would be taken as instalments only of their just demands (hear, hear), and they must not be satisfied with their representatives unless they supported the full demand, that the soil of Ireland should be returned to the people of Ireland (applause)."

In the same week another Tipperary meeting was held, and again the contrast between the utterances of the two

provinces, Leinster and Connaught, was most remarkable. The meeting was under the auspices of the clergy, who appealed to the landlords on behalf of the sober, industrious tenant, and not on behalf of the idle and drunken.

On 18th July, after sitting almost continuously until a quarter to four in the morning, the House of Commons finished the business of the Army Bill. Up to the very last moment the Obstructionists continued their tactics, but at last the measure found its way into the quiet haven of a third reading.

The following Monday the Irish Estimates came in for their turn of obstruction. The first vote proposed was that for the Irish Constabulary, and eight hours elapsed before it was passed. During the debate Major O'Gorman made an amusing speech, in which he laughed at those English Governors of Ireland who could not pronounce the Irish name of Geoghegan.

The interest in the University Bill ceased on its passage through a second reading in the House, on 24th July, but succeeding it, the Ennis election on the 26th produced a feeling of political excitement throughout the country almost unequalled. It was in fact a contest between Mr. Parnell, whose nominee was Mr. Finegan, of London, and the Catholic clergy, who gave their support to Mr. William O'Brien, Q.C. The Ennis victory was a matter of great importance to Mr. Parnell and his party, and the result was hailed with great "national" enthusiasm. Mr. O'Brien, however, had the misfortune to be fighting not only a Nationalist after Mr. Parnell's own heart, but he had also two great additional drawbacks—one, that there was a Conservative candidate also in the

field, and the other that he, a Whig, and a Crown Prosecutor to boot, had only been converted to the doctrines of Home Rule a short time before he commenced his canvass of the electors of Ennis. The result was a defeat by six votes, and picturesque lampoons in the National papers.

A noticeable incident in the rejoicings over the Ennis election was the exhibition in Castlebar of an effigy of Mr. E. D. Gray, M.P., which was paraded through the town, hung, and then burnt, along with a copy of the *Freeman's Journal*, of which paper Mr. Gray is the sole proprietor.

At Shrule, in County Mayo, the last important platform meeting of the month was held on July 27th. Resolutions were passed in favour of reduction of rents and a peasant proprietary. The fact that the anti-rent agitation was only one means to an end, was now first distinctly stated by Mr. Davitt, in a speech remarkable for its plain sentiments. "The good," he said, "already effected by these meetings is not to be measured by the reduction of rents. The successful *exposé* of the inhuman land system, by which Ireland is cursed, and her people impoverished, is both encouraging and hopeful, and must be persevered in, until the public opinion of the civilised world shall seize landlordism by the throat, and compel it to disgorge the plundered heritage of a suffering people. Your fight is against a system which will be held to by the landlords like grim death. *Organise, unite, sap its foundations* by intelligent and persevering operations." In these words, it may be remarked, only once more repeated, is the advice given by the Fenian Devoy in the letter already alluded to. (See Appendix A.)

The month of August commenced with a curious episode. The correspondent of the *Freeman's Journal* published a report that at a meeting of the Home Rule Parliamentary Party, Mr. Parnell, he declared, irritated by their refusal to adopt the course he wished to adopt, called them "a set of cowardly Papist rats." Mr. E. D. Gray said he heard the words, while Mr. Parnell and five of the Obstructionists present flatly denied their ever having been used. The matter still remains a mystery.

On the 2nd August a rent-reduction meeting was held in the town of Dungarvan. One of the resolutions ran as follows :—

"That we pledge ourselves to take no farm from which a tenant has been capriciously evicted, after having offered to pay a fair rent."

But it is remarkable that the Western ring of defiance against the landlords was quite wanting in this Southern meeting ; and indeed it is a matter of fact that such language has been throughout the year almost entirely confined to the province of Connaught.

The immediate result of the repeal of the Convention Act upon the Home Rule League was, that in this month Mr. T. D. Sullivan (editor of the *Nation*) gave notice of the following resolution :—

"That in view of the repeal of the Convention Act, which has recently taken place, we recommend to the consideration of the members of the League and the friends of the Home Rule cause throughout the country, the question whether it would not be desirable to give to the League the authority and influence which would be obtained by converting it into a regularly elected Convention of the Irish nation, with powers to consider and advise upon all political questions affecting the welfare of Ireland."

Further action in the matter was taken later, of which more anon.

The Parliamentary Session was now fast approaching its close, and accordingly it was time to demonstrate the strength of the Home Rule Party in England. The annual convention of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain was held at the Crystal Palace on the 9th, Mr. Parnell, as President for the third year, occupying the chair. As an electoral organization, this confederation is well worthy of attention. Some years ago it was commenced on a regular system, England and Scotland being divided into six districts. A central committee to each has been added, with a special view to electoral work. Some idea of the ramifications of the confederation may be given by the following list of towns and places having Irish circles sending delegates to the convention : — Liverpool, Jarrow-on-Tyne, Birmingham, Leeds, Airdrie, Manchester, Devonport, Finsbury, Marylebone, Lambeth, Greenwich, Chelsea, Hull, Bradford, Bristol, Durham, Crewe, Warrington, Paisley, Glasgow, Shrewsbury, Sheffield, Eccles, Bolton, Newcastle, and Preston. In these towns lies the strength of the Irish vote in England, and in them will centre Irish interest during the next general election.

About this time Mr. O'Clery's Irish Volunteer Bill was thrown out in the House of Lords, and the National School Teachers Bill passed its third reading. This measure must be placed to the credit of Mr. Charles Meldon, Q.C., to whose exertions principally its passing is due. By it salaries are increased, and pensions are granted to the teachers out of the Church Surplus. The Parliamentary and Corrupt Practices Bill also passed the third reading ; and under its provisions two judges, instead of one, now sit to hear election petitions. On

Friday, 15th August, Parliament was relieved from its laborious duties. The Irish Agitator must now be sought for on the platform only, where he proceeded at once to take the same prominent part in politics as he did in the House of Commons, during probably the most violent and fatiguing session of the present Parliament.

III.—AFTER PARLIAMENT.

August—First Balla Meeting.—Davitt's Opinion of Home Rule.—Formation at Castlebar of National Land League by Davitt.—Meeting of Home Rule League in Dublin.—Mr. Parnell at Limerick.—Mr. O'Connor Power at Ballyhaunis and elsewhere in the West.—Mr. Biggar at Draperstown.—Proposed Convention discussed at the Rotundo, September 11th.—Protest of Messrs. Mitchel Henry and Shaw.—Mr. Parnell's Speeches at Tipperary and Carlow.—Davitt at Headford.—The Attack on Mr. Sydney Smyth.—Mr. Parnell at Cork.—Messrs. Biggar and Dillon at Maryborough.—Colonel King-Harman's Letter to the Agitators, read at Dromore Meeting.—A Land Manifesto.—Mr. Parnell at Navan.—Davitt's violent Speech at Annaghdown.—Mr. Parnell at Belfast and Newry.—Meetings at Newport and Ballinamore.—Major O'Beirne's Views.—Actual formation of the National Land League.—Meeting at Enniscorthy.—Collision at Aughamore between the Agitators and the Catholic Clergy.—Disapproval of Bishop M'Évilly, expressed by letter. **November** Meetings at Athenry, Galway, and Gurteen.—At Galway Mr. Parnell points to Davitt as the author of the new Land Agitation.—Full Report of Speeches of Davitt, Daly, and Killen at Gurteen.—Meetings at Corofin and Kilmaine.—Value of Property diminishing in Landed Estates Court.—Addresses to Government by Irish Members and Catholic Hierarchy.—The Agitators in England.—Davitt's Plan for the National Convention.—Meetings at Lackagh, Kiltanin, Islandeady, and Kiltimagh.—Arrest of Davitt, Daly, and Killen.—Brennan's Speech at Balla.—The Agitators in England.—Arrest of Brennan.—Demonstrations at Castlebar and French Hill.—Meetings at Drumsna, Carrick-on-Shannon, Ballina, Mount Party, and Camlough.—The Connaught and Munster Winter Assizes.—Merging of the Central Tenants' Defence Association in the National Land League.—Mr. Lea elected for Donegal.—Mr. Parnell's Departure for America.

ON the very day that Parliament rose, the Land Question in Ireland was lifted into particular prominence in the West at a small village, afterwards more famous, named Balla. A significant remark was made by the

Chairman, Mr. Walsh, who said that, in his opinion, the organised system of landlordism had surpassed the old seignorial system of France, whose fruits were plucked in the whirlwind of revolution. Again Mr. Davitt was a chief speaker. "Death to eviction and the land for the people who till it" was the motto of the agitation. He maintained that the Irish people never cared a jot for Home Rule, and it was lost labour to try and convince England that Ireland wished for a more intimate connection with the empire.

On the next day, August 16th, a Convention of Tenant-farmers took place in Castlebar, at Mr. Daly's own hotel, when Mr. Davitt formed the association known as the National Land League. The document embodying the rules and objects of the proposed association is given in the Appendix, and contains the whole secret of the Western agitation. It purported, in so many words, to be a Vigilance Committee, and laid down, in plain terms, the programme of agitation and terrorism, for the expropriation of landlords' property, which has been so successfully achieved for the last five months. It may be here stated that this new association subsequently swallowed up the more moderate club known as the Central Tenants' Defence Association, and at a meeting of which, in Dublin, Father Tormey first enunciated Mr. Parnell's policy.

A meeting of the Home Rule League was held on 21st August at the Rotundo, Dublin, where Mr. Parnell received an enthusiastic reception. The resolutions, however, were very general, the last, setting on foot a special fund for the purpose of consolidating the Home Rule Party, being exceedingly significant of the state of the League, politically and financially. The feeling of

the meeting was evidently all in favour of the "Exasperators," and against Mr. Shaw and the moderate party ; and if the demonstration proved conclusively how hopelessly the Home Rule Party was divided, it also showed that at the future elections the followers of Parnell would be the choice of the people.

While Mr. Davitt and his Tenant-vigilance Committee were at work in Connaught, Mr. Parnell was busy preparing his utterances for the South, where he was to commence his campaign against the landlords. A great land-meeting was held in Limerick on Sunday, 31st August. Mr. W. H. O'Sullivan, one of the members for the County, attended and spoke. But it is with Mr. Parnell's speech the public is most concerned ; and after alluding to landlords as the drones of the hive, he proceeded to talk about reduction of rent, and said :—

"It was the duty of the Irish tenant-farmers to combine and ask for a reduction of rent (hear, hear), and if they got no reduction where a reduction was necessary, then he said that it was the duty of the tenant to pay no rent until he got it (loud applause) ; and if they combined in that way, if they stood together, and if, being refused a reasonable and just reduction, they kept a firm grip of their homesteads, no power on earth could prevail against the hundreds of thousands of tenant-farmers of this country" (cheers).

He continued by declaring that the land of the country should be owned by the people of the country, and he concluded by calling upon the State and the landlords to make a good bargain, while they could, for the market was falling.

The last resolution is a very fair commentary upon Mr. Parnell's remarks, viz. :—

"That the farmers of this county pledge themselves not to take any farm from which a tenant has been evicted for refusing to pay a rent which, in the opinion of honest and impartial valuers, is a rack-rent, and which would make it impossible for the person paying it to maintain his farm with decency and comfort."

On the following day the Home Rule excursionists took a trip down the Shannon in the steam-ship *Vandeleur*. At Kiltrush an address to Mr. Parnell was presented, the terms of which were as follows :—

“Whereas the United Kingdom is on the eve of a great political struggle, to be contested by Whigs and Tories, and believing that the future welfare of Ireland is at stake, and also believing that the only remedy is to support Mr. Parnell’s policy, so sickening to John Bull, we are resolved at the next general election to give our united support to Erin’s noblest son and England’s bitterest enemy, Charles Stuart Parnell.”

At about three o’clock the company on board sat down to dinner, Mr. John Ellard, Town Clerk of Limerick, in the chair. Amongst those present were—Messrs. Parnell, M.P., O’Sullivan, M.P., O’Shaughnessy, M.P., D. F. Gabbett, M.P.; two Justices of the Peace, Messrs. M’Donnell and Spillane; fifteen Catholic clergymen; and several Limerick town-councillors. The following shows what the chairman is reported to have said, and how he was interrupted :—

“The chairman said it was their first duty to propose ‘The Queen (hisses), Lords, and Commons of Ireland.’ He trusted that the day was not far distant when this toast could be proposed with the Lords and Commons of Ireland sitting in the old house in College Green (cheers), acting with her Majesty (hisses) for the welfare of Ireland.”

On the same Sunday as the meeting at Limerick, Mr. O’Connor Power, M.P., fulfilled his part of the agitator’s business at Ballyhaunis, in the West. Whatever was left out in Mr. Parnell’s speech was filled in by Mr. Power. He dealt with the details of the sweeping reforms he proposed, and which he has subsequently embodied in an article in the *Nineteenth Century*. The programme drawn out by Mr. Davitt at Castlebar he cordially endorsed (see

Appendix). In dealing with absentees the member for Mayo would not be contented with a tax. All property held by absentee proprietors should be subject to a compulsory sale. The sale of waste lands should also be forced on by Government, and four millions of acres could be planted with a hundred thousand peasant proprietors. The time had gone by for fixity of tenure, Mr. Power declared. If carried in time it would have benefited the masses of the people ; but the proposal to settle the Land Question by compulsory sale of property, so as to distribute it among the occupiers, was the proposal that in England found the most general acceptance. The resolutions carried were that the tiller of the soil should be the owner, and that the landlord system should be abolished.

After this meeting Mr. Power made a tour of all the principal towns in Mayo, arriving at last in Castlebar on Sunday, September 7th, where he delivered a characteristic address. Before he had the honour of occupying a seat in Parliament, Mr. Power said he had had the far greater honour of occupying a wooden stool in a prison cell because of his services to Ireland. He defied the Government to prosecute him, and stated his intention to carry on the campaign they had just left off in Parliament into almost every city and village in Ireland. Mr. Power concluded by saying he was in favour of the establishing of a Parliamentary tribunal for ascertaining the value of the various properties in Ireland. He was in favour of offering to the landlords just compensation, and then to let them depart in peace. He would have the landlords disestablished just as the Irish Church was disestablished. He would say to them that their system had been found inconsistent with the welfare of the Irish

people, and that it was the first duty of the Government to save the lives of the people, who did not deserve instant destruction.

To Mr. Biggar had been entrusted the task of propagating these doctrines in Ulster; and accordingly at Draperstown, County of Londonderry, on the 5th September, the member for Cavan gave vent to some very striking observations upon the subject of the disestablishment of landlords, of which the following is a specimen :—

“The landlords were in this awkward position—that they had refused to accept every reform that had yet been introduced on behalf of the tenants. Mr. Butt’s Land Bill proposed fixity of tenure, which only meant that the occupier should not be dispossessed as long as he paid a fixed rent, the rent being subject to revision every twenty-one years. The landlords refused to accept the principle of that measure, and now the occupiers of the soil went in for something else. If the landlords refused the reasonable and fair concession now asked for they might have to suffer a great deal, because ultimately a bloody revolution might take place in these kingdoms, and the land might be taken from the landlords entirely, as it was in France” (cheers).

The time was now ripe for the subject of the proposed National Convention to be discussed. Accordingly the Home Rule League met on 11th September in the Rotundo in Dublin, and, under the wing of Mr. Parnell and the Extreme Left Home Rulers, decided to take advantage at once of the repeal of the Convention Act. Forty self-constituted members of the League accordingly determined to convoke a representative Convention in Dublin, to imitate and foreshadow an Irish Parliament. It was to consist of 300 elected delegates, and every Irishman residing in Ireland who contributed a shilling was to be entitled to nominate ten persons for election, and to vote for 300 persons of the total number nominated. The only Home Rulers who publicly protested

and refused to have anything to say to the movement were Mr. Mitchell Henry and Mr. Shaw.

At Clifden and Killanin, County Galway; at Carrigallen, County Leitrim; and at Mallow, at Cahir, and Ballinderreen, County Tipperary, Land meetings were held about this time, but none of the leading agitators presided, and, in consequence, the language used was comparatively moderate.

The next important platform meeting was at Tipperary, where Messrs. O'Clery, P. J. Smyth, and Parnell were present, and spoke. That the cry of reduction of rents was a mere blind for the propagation of the anti-landlord agitation is proved more and more conclusively by what Mr. Parnell said on this occasion. He commenced by assuming premises totally unwarranted by facts, to prove a false conclusion. He said that it was not the lowness of prices, or the bad harvest prospects, which had hit the farmer so hard, and had made his livelihood precarious, but it was because the system of landlords was a bad and worthless one. How to get rid of them, therefore, was the problem, and this was his advice :—

“It is no use looking to Parliament if you go on paying rents which the land is not capable of yielding (cheers). If any of you who may have saved some capital during good times go on paying those rents, why you cannot expect, and you will not get, the landlords to lower them, and you will not get your farms—you will remain the serfs and helots that you are (cries of ‘Never,’ and ‘Shoot them’). Therefore, it is for you to stand together, to be determined, to insist upon a reasonable reduction where a reasonable reduction is necessary, and where you don't get a reasonable reduction, then I say that it is your duty to pay no rent at all (prolonged cheering). Now, this may seem very extreme talk, but I tell you that it is common sense, because if you have only got half or three-fourths of the rent to pay your landlord, and he refuses you a reduction, what is the use of your paying him that half or three-fourths?”

The systematic stumping of the Land agitators con-

tinued to be kept up with increased vigour during the whole of September. On Sunday, 28th, no less than four meetings were held in four different counties, viz., Clare, Carlow, Mayo, and Galway. The first was held under the auspices of the Clare Farmers' Club, near Ennis, with Rev. Mr. White, of Central Tenants' Defence Association fame, as Chairman. The speakers were all either Catholic clergymen or Poor Law Guardians, and their speeches were merely requests for reductions of rent. At Tullow, County Carlow, Mr. Parnell simply repeated the advice he gave at Limerick, without, however, stating in terms that the true object of the agitation was the abolition of landlords. His reason was obvious. The Carlow audience knew by experience the value of a resident landlord class. At Castlebar, County Mayo, Mr. O'Connor Power held forth with the full western tone of menace. His words were—"I state boldly that the landlords of Ireland, as a class, have been the robbers of the people of Ireland." Mr. Davitt filled in the picture at Headford, County Galway, by declaring that if a sacrifice was to be made by the Government, it must be that of a monstrous Land system, and not a periodic holocaust of its impoverished victims. The Government would be compelled to see the necessity of establishing the tiller as the proprietor of the soil, and granting to the people what they would no longer be denied. Such compulsion was as feasible in the direction of an industrial ownership as in the tinkering tentative of fixity of tenure. Security without ownership would now never be accepted by Ireland as a satisfactory settlement of the Land Question.

The end of September was marked by a desperate attempt in Mayo to murder two land agents. On the

last day of the month Mr. George Sydney Smith, the agent of Lord Sligo, went with his son to collect rents, and on their return they were attacked at a place near Newport by four men with blackened faces, who all fired, but failed to injure any of the party upon the car. Mr. Smith, jun., however, returned the fire, and killed one of the murderous gang.

The plan of addressing meetings in different counties and provinces on the same day, was adhered to in October by the agitators with great success. On Sunday, 5th, the propagandists of the new land-doctrines were at work arousing the people of Cork, Queen's County, and comprising Mayo and Sligo in their deeds of daring. Mr. Parnell, at Cork, advised the tenants to offer a passive resistance, and refuse to pay unjust rents. He told them that while they were in possession of the land was the time to take the necessary precautions to remain there. In a veiled manner, in fact, owing to the southern audience he was addressing, Mr. Parnell gave the occupiers to understand that the Mayo plan was the only one worth adopting.

At Maryborough, Messrs. Biggar, M.P., and John Dillon were the principal operators upon the people. The latter gentleman was hailed as the future member for the Queen's County, and his advice was frank and to the point. He said :—

“ His advice was to abstain from outrages, because outrages were not necessary. Let each parish form a tenant-right league, and meet outside the chapel every Sunday after Mass, and let every man tell his neighbours his story, and let them elect a leader in each parish, and when a hardship was told, call a meeting and denounce the landlord ; publish the case, and send it up to the *Freeman* in Dublin, and they will publish it, and they would frighten the landlords in that way (applause). If that did not succeed, have a monster meeting ; ask Mr. Parnell to come over to denounce the landlord,

and he will (cheers). The fight will begin after the November days. What will the landlords do when they refused them the rents of November? Let those who have the money pay the rent, and those that have too high rents ask the landlord to reduce them by 50 or 60 per cent., and if he refused, pay no rent. He will then serve the tenant with notice, and they must have the meetings every Sunday, and if the last resource were adopted, they must put a ban on his land. If any man then takes up that land, let no man speak to him, or have any business transactions with him."

Mr. O'Connor Power, at Ballinrobe, on the same day, with Mr. Davitt's assistance, held a mass meeting, numbering 25,000. Bands, banners bearing such mottoes as "Down with land robbers," "Ireland for the Irish," and horsemen and footmen bearing mock pikes, were the order of the day, and the usual anti-landlord resolutions were adopted.

The Sligo demonstration, held at Dromore West, was principally remarkable for a letter from Colonel King-Harman, M.P. for the county, and a Home Ruler, which was read upon the platform. It is a valuable piece of evidence as to the effects of the new departure in Irish agitation:—

"During this week a number of meetings have been held in various parts of Ireland, with the ostensible purpose of discussing the distressed state of the agricultural population of Ireland, at which speeches have been made and sentiments enunciated which I consider to be calculated to mislead the people, to injure the cause which they profess to advocate, and to embitter the relations between classes of persons whose interests should be bound up together. The entire class of landlords has been held up to public odium, and resolutions have been passed pledging the tenants to adopt courses which, if carried out, must infallibly lead to the misery and ruin of many. The result has come but too quickly. Threatening letters, brutal outrages, and lastly an attempt at murder in an adjoining county, which has terminated fatally for one unfortunate man, have followed in rapid succession. It is my deliberate opinion that the cause of these terribly sad events can only be found in the speeches of reckless agitators. I trust and believe that no such orations will be made at Dromore West; but I cannot find it consistent with my conscience or my duty to take part in any meeting where the possi-

bility of such dire evil may arise, nor can I allow my name to be quoted in the same column with men who only for their own purposes would embark an already suffering people in a course which must tend to bloodshed and ruin. I am, therefore, reluctantly compelled to decline attending any meeting at present."

The following manifesto, which at this time was circulated in County Westmeath, is a fair example of the new principles of contract and morality laid down by the new company of land reformers:—

' "The only cure for the universal depression of trade in 1879:—Land must come down to its proper value, about 2s. 6d. or 5s. per acre. The farmers of Great Britain and Ireland must have land that will enable them to compete with the freeholder of America. The people must have cheap food that the British employers may get cheap labour, so that they may compete with the foreigners, and keep our people industriously and profitably employed. Somebody must be disappointed—either the farmer who expects to pay his way and a big rent, or the landlord who expects to have his old way and the old rent too. The land belongs to the people; the Crown, as representative of the people, and guardian of their rights and privileges, being head landlord. An Act of Parliament may authorise a public company to buy, and compel owners to sell, land for public interests. An Act of Parliament may authorise the Crown to buy, and compel the so-called landlords of the soil to sell, the land at a fair price to the Crown, when, as at present, the necessities of the empire require that exorbitant rents and capricious owners should be got rid of by purchase, and they will be easily purchased soon. Let the interest of the purchase-money be the rent. Thus in a few years the Crown would have a large and well-paid revenue, and a thousand prosperous, contented, and right loyal tenants for the one mischief-making landlord of the present day. Disendow and disestablish the landlords as the Church was disendowed and disestablished in Ireland. Away with land monopoly. If you want tenant-right, if you want leave to live on the land of your birth, send no landlords to Parliament; as well send wolves to guard sheep. Send men who will protect the industry, trade, commerce, and agriculture of the empire. If you want to put a stop to agrarian disputes, agrarian outrages, extra police, and vexatious taxation, send no landlords to Parliament, and let your watchword be, God save the Crown and People."

The absence of Mr. O'Donnell from the various meetings of the autumn, has probably been noticed. In a

letter to the *Freeman* the member for Dungarvan assures the public that it is only owing to ill health that he is prevented from taking an active part in the proceedings.

Again a Sunday (12th October) was the scene in various places of land demonstrations. Mr. Parnell was greeted in the Market-square of Navan, County Meath, by 30,000 people. It is as well to give exactly what the member of Meath's advice to his own constituents was. He said :—

“ The only course for the tenant-farmers of Ireland is this—now that they are in possession of their farms to see that they remain in possession of them (cheers). Go to your landlord, and if he disagrees with your estimate of what a fair rent should be, ask him to appoint one man, and say that you will appoint another, and they will settle it between them. If he refuses this arrangement, offer him what you consider you can fairly be called on to pay in these times, and ask him for a clear receipt (cries of ‘ they wont give it’). If he refuses to give you a clear receipt, put the money in your pockets, and hold it until he comes to his senses (cheers and laughter). If the tenants on each property join together and do this, the cause of the tenant-farmer in Ireland is won. No landlord can prevail against you.”

This was well backed up by Mr. O'Connor Power, who added the necessary conclusion, “ Abolish landlordism, and make the tiller of the soil the owner of the soil he tills. That is the only effectual way of coping with foreign competition. Introduce the American Land System into England and Ireland.”

Further meetings on this Sunday were held in Newport, Co. Tipperary, in Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo ; and at Annaghdown, Co. Galway, Mr. Davitt made an exceedingly violent speech, one of the series which subsequently culminated in the charge of sedition. As it is important to note the language of the agitators growing more threatening as the movement gained strength, no apology is necessary for giving extracts.

Alluding to the tenants Mr. Davitt said :—

"The only relief, the sole reliance, is therefore in themselves. Realising this to its full extent, at last the democracy of Ireland has resolved upon sustaining the supreme right of existence conferred upon the people by their Creator. Apart from the present distress, the growing mind of the Irish people cannot brook a land system which retards instead of advancing their civilisation and social progress, and an onslaught upon such land laws is the national instinctive act of a resurgent nation (great cheers). On the Rent Question, as on that of the Land, your greatest dependence must be in yourselves. Never mind the companies of Zulu-whipped soldiers that are now being sent over here in answer to your cry for the means of sustenance. Don't imagine you will be thrown out to die like dogs as your kindred were in '48. Stand firmly and self-reliantly against the brood of cormorant vampires that have sucked the life-blood out of the country, that has banished our brothers and sisters, and that has made our people a nation of paupers, and ere long we will have no legalised plundering system in Ireland to sustain the most profligate horde of unmitigated land thieves that ever cursed a people and robbed them of the profits of their industry. They may threaten you with eviction if you refuse to pay rack-rents imposed upon your holdings, but don't forget that an English Cabinet Minister once declared that eviction under certain aggravated circumstances was a felony. You know it is a maxim of English law that a felony can be resisted to the death. It is also well to take advice and examples from England, as the English are a practical people, and I believe there is a favourite one of theirs to be put into practice this winter here in Ireland if the Government does not find employment for the starving people. You have read of the people of London marching on the House of Commons when they desired to bring that assembly to their senses on some public grievance question. Well, I am told to keep it secret that a move in this manner is to be made in Ireland this winter. I hope the reporters won't take it down while I am telling you that 250,000 men are to march to Dublin Castle, and demand bread for themselves and children if no public works are started by the Government this winter, to enable them to earn it. I am sure that 100,000 of that number will march from Connaught. Depend upon it, then, that you are not to die by hunger as our kindred did in '48. Do not despair, but be up and doing. Organise yourselves into clubs and protection associations, labour unceasingly for your own and your country's advancement, and you will yet have the proud privilege of beholding the people of Ireland the owners of its fruitful soil and rulers of its own fair and yet unconquered land" (cheers).

This speech of Mr. Davitt, threatening an organised

movement of the masses upon Dublin during the winter, in case the Government would not accede to the agitators' demands, had considerable effect upon the Castle authorities. From this time Government shorthand writers attended at each demonstration to make notes of every platform utterance. It was evident the climax was arriving.

At both Belfast and Newry Mr. Parnell addressed meetings and laid down his views forcibly and unmistakably. On the 16th, at Newry, he let fall some hints as to the past and future of the movement. Mr. Parnell said he believed that the Land System could be settled by the determined obstruction of tenant-farmers outside Parliament against the payment of rents, and by determined obstruction in Parliament against the business of the House, until a satisfactory measure was carried on the subject. But at present, he confessed the utter inability of the Obstructionists to get anything in Parliament, because they were so hampered by want of men of determination and courage, that it was quite useless to attempt anything by Parliamentary action. They had, therefore, to confine themselves to the platform agitation in the country. With twenty active men in the House of Commons they would be enabled to take up an attitude towards the Government worthy of the people of Ireland. This was the great object to be attained at the general election.

On Sunday, 19th, a demonstration took place at Newport, Co. Mayo, at which Mr. Davitt referred to the "reptile press" of Dublin in connection with the presence of a reporter who was taking notes of his speech. The speech was a violent tirade against landlords. He said the contest was between a toiling and industrious people

and the arbitrary demands of a lazy, good-for-nothing, idle, sensual, and voluptuous class. They would never cease agitating until the last vestige of feudalism was swept from Ireland.

At Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim, the next day, a large meeting was held, and Major O'Beirne, M.P., declared himself for a radical change in the Land System.

The actual formation of the National Land League, the charter of which we give in the Appendix, took place in Dublin, 21st October. As before remarked, it partakes of the nature of a Vigilance Committee, the President being Mr. Parnell, and the Secretaries, Messrs. Kettle, Davitt, and Brennan. The proposed objects were the reduction of rents, with the ultimate object of obtaining the "Land for the People." The appeal to the Irish race (see Appendix) was also adopted, and it was resolved "that Mr. Parnell be requested to proceed to America for the purpose of obtaining assistance from our exiled countrymen and other sympathisers, for the objects for which this appeal is issued."

The month of October closed with a group of Sunday demonstrations, in which Enniscorthy, County Wexford, led the van. Government reporters were again at work upon the platform, taking notes of the speeches. Mr. Parnell was the leading orator, and once more he advocated reduction of rents first, for the ulterior purpose of abolishing the system of landlord and tenant. At Aughamore Mr. Davitt said particularly that they were not there to agitate for fixity of tenure at fair rents, which meant fixity of landlordism, for that they were resolved should never be fixed on Irish soil. A remarkable collision at this meeting between a Catholic clergyman, Canon M'Dermott and Messrs. Davitt, Daly, and Nally is sig-

nificant as to the attitude of the agitators towards the clergy, which, though respectful, was yet quite independent.

The disapproval expressed by Archbishop MacHale of the violent platform meetings in the West has been already noticed. Another letter, something in the same tone, was written by Bishop MacEvilly on the proposed Galway meeting at the end of November. It deprecated the introduction of "outsiders" as speakers, and pointed out that any violent, unconstitutional, defiant language, far from doing good, would do positive mischief.

The first ten days of November were marked by great Land meetings at Athenry, Galway, and Gurteen, the last of which was to prove historical in a very short time. At the Galway meeting, Mr. Parnell made a very plain statement as to the object of the agitation. He carefully explained that the strike against paying rent, and the refusal of tenants to take farms from which tenants were evicted, were merely means to an end, and that end was the compulsory sale of all landlord property in the land of Ireland. The main object was, that by the due exercise of terrorism, combined with a wholesale repudiation of contract, nobody would finally come forward to purchase the lands of which the tenants were occupiers. Then the Surplus Church Fund was to be taken, the landlords bought out at a ruinous loss, and the tenants rooted in the soil of Ireland. All this, Mr. Parnell hoped, would be helped on by the distress and the winter. But the most remarkable statement made by Mr. Parnell was to the effect that Mr. Davitt, who had received an intimation from the Archbishop of Tuam that his presence on the Galway platform was undesirable, was the author

of the new scheme of Land agitation. The report says :—

“Mr. Parnell, who was again loudly cheered, moved a vote of thanks to the Chairman. In the course of his remarks, he said he wished to apologise for the absence of his friend, Mr. Michael Davitt (cheers). Mr. Davitt would have been here to-day but that it was intimated to him from a very high source that his presence would not be agreeable. Now he (Mr. Parnell) regretted very much that this message was sent to Mr. Davitt. He was a man who was entitled to stand upon every tenant-right platform in Ireland (cheers), because to him was due the initiation of this movement for a reduction of rents and the ownership of the soil by the occupiers (cheers). So long ago as last February he began this movement in the west of Ireland, and he had kept it on foot ever since, in many instances by his own exertions alone, and almost unaided. They must not be exclusive in this movement. They must invite the co-operation of every true and honest Irishman (hear, hear). All their numbers would be little enough to carry it out—the priest and the peasant, the bishop and the political prisoner, must work together for the cause” (loud cheers).

But if Mr. Davitt was denied access to one platform on this 2nd of November, he found ample opportunity and a sympathetic audience at Gurteen, where he and Mr. Daly, and Mr. J. B. Killen delivered themselves of those addresses which were subsequently taken as the foundation of charges of sedition by the Government. As therefore important, they are here given :—

DAVITT'S SPEECH.

“The papers stated that the Right Hon. James Lowther—(groans)—was now the guest of their highly consistent and patriotic Home Rule member, Colonel King-Harman (groans). The papers also credited Mr. Lowther with an original discovery that the tenant-farmers of Ireland had £30,000,000 in Irish banks to their credit, and that that money formed a good security to landlords to obtain their rents during the winter. . . . But, if it is true, I deny that you should draw upon that in this year of impending famine and dire misfortune before us, in order to satisfy the greed and avarice of the landlords. If you have it there, I say look first to the necessities of your children, of your wives, and of your homes; look to the wants and necessities of the coming winter; and when

you have satisfied those wants and necessities, if you have a charitable disposition to meet the wants of the landlord, give him what you can spare, and give him no more. I am one of those peculiarly constituted Irishmen who believe that rent for land under any circumstances, in prosperous times or bad times, is nothing more nor less than an unjust and immoral tax upon the industry of a people; and I further believe that landlordism, as an institution, is an open conspiracy against the well-being, prosperity, and happiness of a people; and I say that anything that is immoral—whether it be a rent or an open conspiracy of landlordism—has to be crushed by the people who suffer in consequence of it. . . . Look at it from a purely commercial point of view, and how does it operate against the people of the country? Say that the 600,000 farmers in Ireland earn on an average £1 10s. each week. Some earn more perhaps, but a considerable number earn a great deal less. However, we will put down £1 10s. as the average weekly earnings of the farmers of Ireland, and that would produce an aggregate sum of about £45,000,000 a-year, £45,000,000 a-year earned by 600,000 farmers in Ireland at the rate of £1 10s. a-week. Out of that sum of forty-five millions how much do you think 3,000 individuals called landlords exact for themselves every year? Mind, 3,000—about one-third the number of persons present at this meeting. Well, the 3,000 Irish landlords pocket the neat sum of £20,000,000, or nearly half the entire earnings of the six hundred thousand Irish farmers. But not only that. Not a single one of them ever puts a foot to plough, or hand to spade, to earn a penny of that. The farmers must labour from morning till eve to support themselves and their children, when in steps Mr. Lazy Unproductive Landlord, and demands almost half of the money so earned to sustain himself in the licentious and voluptuous life he very often leads, not in Ireland, but away in London, Paris, and elsewhere. Not only does this system rob you of half your earnings, but it robs Ireland, it impoverishes Ireland, and goes away to another country to enrich another people who never raised it. And are you going to tolerate any tinkering of this system? Are we here to listen to any proposal of fixity of tenure at fair rents, with periodical valuations? I say no. That is fixity of landlordism, fixity of poverty and squalor, and fixity of degradation, that have made Ireland a reproach before civilization, a nation of beggars. I say that at last, in face of another impending famine, too plainly visible, the time has come when the manhood of Ireland will spring to its feet and say it will tolerate this system no longer. . . . My friend, Mr. O'Connor, told you that it is probable the Government might have Zululand in its eye when its officials and its organs talk about an emigration scheme. But I will tell you why I don't believe they mean that. There is a great similarity between the Irish pike and the Zulu assegais, and the English soldiers who went out to civilise the Zulus

at the point of the bayonet found that the savage African knew how to handle the assegai almost as well as our ancestors knew how to handle the pike in '98. . . . In the small village of Gurteen there were 600 mechanics—that is, 600 men who worked as mechanics of manufacturing towns work in England and other manufacturing countries. I will suppose again that a stranger comes into Gurteen, a man never heard of before, but who has some qualification from an Imperial point of view. I will suppose that his great-grandfather assisted the butcher, Lord Clive, in blowing up Hindoos from the mouths of British cannon. I will suppose this man has these qualifications from the noble and historic deeds of his ancestry. He comes to Gurteen and has a magnificent establishment built for himself, and the Government gives him the right to exact a sum of £20,000 each year from the aggregate earnings of the 600 mechanics. Now, do you think that that would be fair? Do you think that it would be a moral law or a moral government that would impose this man as a tax upon the energy and industry of Gurteen? That is exactly what the English Government is doing to Ireland at large, enabling 3,000 landlords to pocket £20,000,000 of the earnings of the Irish people every year; and until that system is abolished, and the term landlord wiped out, and the land belongs to the people who cultivate the soil, both in reference to the government of the country and the tilling of the land, we must resolve to-day never to cease labouring, persevering, and working until we have done what every other civilized people have done, and won our right to the ownership of our own soil. In conclusion, I would ask you not to be content with coming to these meetings and applauding sentences in connection with landlordism or the misgovernment of Ireland, but work and co-operate together in clubs and in protection societies, until there is such an overpowering organization throughout the whole of Ireland that will not only break down landlordism, but every other barrier that stands between the people of Ireland and their just rights."

DALY'S SPEECH.

"It was said by Canon M'Dermot, what will the people do if they only ask for a peasant proprietary? Will you submit to be evicted and put out on the roadside? Meanwhile I say, don't allow yourselves to be evicted, and in the five cases he referred to it is your duty as tenant-farmers if they are evicted to go the following day—I won't say that night, because it might be illegal—but when they are evicted assemble there in your thousands. See they are not evicted, or at all events reinstate them, and continue to do that every time they are turned out; but, above all, if they are evicted let no cowardly fellow be found to take their lands. It is very easy for people to make very flattering speeches. I, however, am too fond of telling the truth, and I tell you that it is with you to keep the people in the

soil. I tell you not to pay the landlords—pay nobody. I wont say the shopkeeper. Do pay him, for you may require him again, and the seedsman; but don't pay the landlord until you have some guarantee from him or the Government that you wont see your children starving. Preservation is the first law of nature, and if it's the case with you that the grain crop is worth very little more than the tilling and seeding of the land, how can the landlord expect that you are to pay the rack-rents that he hampers you with year after year? Will the landlord act as he should? Will he reduce it to the actual value you get out of the holding? It is easy to praise up landlords, but I don't care how good they are, I say that until the word "landlordism" is written out of the Statute-book, as in France and elsewhere, you will never be very contented or prosperous. I wont detain you any longer, but, in conclusion, I give you this bit of advice—hold your farms. Let them serve you with notice to quit, with ejectments; let them, if they like, proceed to the courts. Defend yourselves, but don't allow them to evict you. Then, supposing anyone is evicted, let you assemble and put him in again that very night; and if there is a coward enough found among you to take another's land, then, I hope, he will be served as he deserves."

KILLEN'S SPEECH.

"When I saw this large assemblage before me, I thought of an old legend I heard in the North, that in a cavern there were a thousand mailed warriors resting on their swords, who would, when their engagement was broken, at the sound of the angel of liberty's proclamation of Ireland's liberty and freedom, burst forth. When I saw you in your age, in your middle age, in the glory of your manhood, ay, and in your womanhood too, I thought the hour had arrived when Ireland's liberty was about to be consummated. In the 700 years during which we have had the happiness to be under the control of England there have been at least three confiscations of the land of Ireland. Every single acre of the land has changed hands three times during that period. It has not passed, however, into the hands of another class of people, but from the hands of one class of aristocracy into another class of aristocracy. Now, we want a fourth confiscation, or rather a resumption to the people of what originally belonged to them, the land of their forefathers. I need not tell you not to pay all the rent that is asked from you. You cannot do it. I know you cannot. But what I say is this: I am sure the landlords in all cases will not act so generously with you as in the generosity of your own souls you think they should. There are some men who will bring the law into operation on you, bring notices to quit and ejectments, and turn you out of your houses and farms. But if there be any man who will go into that house or farm

—well, may the Lord take care of him. I leave it to yourselves. Self-preservation is the first law of nature, and I leave it to you to say whether we are to obtain our rights, as in other countries, by the pen, the pencil, or the sword if you wish it. Oh ! the time has gone by for any namby-pamby speaking. We must now approach the matter with ungloved hand, speak to the men face to face, and tell them what you want and what we mean. I say nothing here but what I am prepared to stand by."

And now having brought the Irish agitator to the climax of his agitation, it remains but briefly to glance at the remaining incidents of the political year. Meeting succeeded meeting during the month of November. The whole of Ireland was ablaze with the fever of agitation. The Irish National Land League issued such another address to Irish farmers as it had issued to the Irish race in America (see Appendix). Once more the object of the anti-rent agitation was distinctly stated :—"The agitation," the Address laid down, "must be sustained, so that the operation of natural causes may be assisted in bringing land to a fair valuation, in order to enable its cultivators to become the owners of their own farms, upon terms within the means of every occupier."

The object of Mr. Parnell's journey to America is no doubt merely to collect money for the sustentation of this enormous Vigilance Committee, the Irish National Land League, and this is proved by the recommendation at its first meeting to send out Mr. Parnell as a deputation to America, and the following sentence :—

"For this and other purposes beneficial to the farming classes organisation is required among them ; and to sustain this land movement and encourage such organisation, as well as to render assistance where necessary to victims of landlord oppression, we have appealed for money to our banished kindred, and for these purposes, and these alone, we now appeal to you for whatever aid you can afford to render."

All this time the West of Ireland was the scene of violent platform harangues, Mr. Davitt at Corofin, Mr. Daly and Mr. Loudon at Kilmaine. The effect upon the value of property was palpable. In the Landed Estates Court properties were put and no sales effected. For some no bidders were forthcoming. Judge Flanagan, commenting upon the cases, said there appeared to be an undue depreciation of property, and under such circumstances he would allow the sales to be adjourned.

But besides the voice of the agitator, there was heard in November the utterances of officials, members of Parliament, and ecclesiastics upon the state of the country.

The Local Government Board Inspectors' Report (see Appendix) foreshadowed distress and destitution and increased pauperism, but not more than the resources of the Poor Law Unions could cope with. Seventy-one Irish members of Parliament and the Catholic Hierarchy demanded in their addresses State assistance in the shape of relief works.

Meanwhile Mr. Parnell and his company, evidently imagining a dissolution was contemplated, left their un-Parliamentary comrades to look after the Irish agitation, and proceeded to England on a week's stumping tour. Messrs. Parnell, Finigan, Mitchell Henry, and O'Connor Power spoke at Manchester. Thence Mr. Parnell went to Bolton, and afterwards with Mr. Finigan to Leeds, while Messrs. O'Connor Power and A. M. Sullivan addressed their Irish friends in London. Newcastle-on-Tyne was also visited by Mr. A. M. Sullivan.

On the return of the agitators steps were immediately taken to utilise the Repeal of the Convention Act by organising a National Convention and settling a date for its assembly. At a special meeting of the National Con-

vention Committee Mr. Davitt was the chief spokesman, and explained the system he had formulated. The plan was based upon O'Connell's plan for the reconstruction of the Irish House of Commons. The National Convention should comprise 300 delegates, the place of meeting to be Dublin, and the franchise to be manhood, and not a shilling franchise. Mr. Davitt's private wish was to have the first meeting of the Convention in 1882, not only to mark the centenary, but to allow time to organise and prepare the country, but the resolution adopted contained the words not later than April, 1882. All Mr. Davitt's resolutions were carried, and the meeting adjourned, not, however, destined to meet upon the day fixed.

The Government were preparing their indictments, and the hand was raised to strike. On Sunday 15th, four meetings were held in the West, at Lackagh and Kiltanin in Galway, and at Islandeady and Kiltimagh in Mayo. At each place the attendance was very numerous and evinced a large amount of enthusiasm and organisation among the people. At Lackagh the scene was most remarkable. In point of numbers, order, and enthusiasm it was second to none that had yet been held in connection with the Land movement. Contingents came from Corofin, Annaghdown, Claregalway, and Athenry, each displaying flags, banners, and imitation swords, guns, and pikes. There were about 500 horsemen, dressed in green uniforms, bearing imitation swords. The entrances to the platform were spanned with arches bearing the inscriptions, "Welcome, Brennan," "Cead mile failte," "A Peasant Proprietary," "In Unity is Strength," &c. High over the meeting, from a pole fixed on top of an old castle, floated in the

breeze a flag exhibiting the motto, "Down with the Land Robbers!" There were other mottoes pendant from flagstuffs in various parts of the field, such as "No more Land Thieves," "The Land for the People," "God save Ireland," &c. A young lad from Mounhagh, riding a donkey, carried a flag with a cartoon representing a sturdy Irish tenant holding a landlord by the throat, and asking him, "Is it you that wants the Rent?" Under the cartoon was the singular scroll in Irish, "Myself and my wee donkey." The most violent speaker was Mr. Brennan, who was subsequently arrested. At Killanin, on the same day, Mr. Davitt surpassed himself in his declaration of policy and his advice to the people, and at Kiltinagh the ball was kept rolling by Messrs. Loudon and Daly.

Whether it was this last quadrilateral rhetorical effort on the part of the land agitators which decided Government to move is unknown. But on the following Wednesday, Nov. 19th, Dublin and Sligo were astonished by the news that Messrs. Davitt, Daly, and Killen had been arrested on charges of having made use of seditious language at Gurteen on the 2nd November. The three prisoners were taken to Sligo Gaol, and, after a magisterial investigation, committed for trial, and allowed out upon bail.

The excitement among the popular party was, of course, intense. A Rotundo meeting was held, where extreme language was used, and speeches were made by Mr. Parnell in defence of the accused on several occasions, on one of which he made use of the following words:—

"Fellow-countrymen, I beg you to remember there are to-night countrymen of yours suffering in prison—(hisses)—because they attempted to show their fellow-countrymen the road to freedom

(cheers). Remember the voice of Michael Davitt is speaking to you from his prison (cheers). Hold up your hands with me and vow you will not cease—(great cheering, during which the hands of thousands of people were held up)—that you will not cease from this struggle until the teachings of Michael Davitt, for which he has been persecuted to-day, shall have been carried out and fulfilled to the very last letter."

The day after, November 23rd, a remarkable scene occurred at Balla, Co. Mayo, where a great demonstration of a double character took place. It was originally intended as an indignation meeting, which was to meet according to the rules of the Local Vigilance Committee, and witness a threatened eviction. It was the first eviction in Mayo since the Land agitation commenced, and at once placards appeared all over the county summoning the people to assemble at the scene of the eviction. The summons had hardly been made when the arrests took place, and, in consequence, a second proclamation was made to enforce a double protest. The speech of the day was that of Mr. Brennan, some of whose utterances have already been noticed. But on this occasion the fury of his language was such, that it was made the foundation of another charge of sedition, for which he was subsequently arrested. The speech is here given *in extenso* :—

MR. BRENNAN'S SPEECH AT BALLA.

" We are here to-day for a threefold purpose. We are here, in the first place, to protest against the eviction and possible death of nine of God's creatures. We are here to protest, in the name of our country and of justice, against the unconstitutional arrest of our leaders, who are now paying the penalty of their devotion to the people's cause ; and we are here also to declare our determination to go on with this movement until victory is secured, and until the last trace of feudal landlordism is swept from the country. The English Government have come to the rescue of that accursed institution, but it cannot save it. The old crumbling edifice is going, and it

must fall. Prison-bars cannot hide the light of God's eternal truth, and though you or I may have to follow Mr. Davitt or Mr. Daly, our cause cannot be imprisoned. That cause is just, and it must triumph. My friends, our lives are no longer our own. They now belong to our country and to justice, and we must consecrate them here to-day to the advancement of that cause for which our friends are suffering. I for one am not here to-day to withdraw anything I have ever said in this movement since I first stood upon that platform in Irishtown. And whatever may be the words of Mr. Davitt used at the Gurteneen meeting I adopt them here to-day; and if I knew them I would repeat them for you, believing in my soul that they are the words of justice and of truth. It will not become us here to make long-winded orations to-day. The time for mere speech-making is gone by, and the hour of resolve and the act has arrived. The speech to-day is the indignation which I see flashing from your eyes and the determination which rests upon your brow. Think of the possible scene which we might be called upon here to-day to witness. Think of the poor man who lies in yonder cabin, the hot fever darting wildly through his brain—think of the poor child who, every time it asks for a morsel of bread, sends a pang worse than a bayonet thrust through its mother's bosom. Think of this, and then think of the evictor, who has fled the country that his ears may not catch the execration of the people. Think of him as he enjoys all the luxuries of life, and pockets the money which the sweat of that poor man has wrought from the land, for in this enlightened nineteenth century God's first law to fallen man is contravened by human decree, and the majority of mankind must work and toil to support the few in idleness. Think of the scenes of '47—think of the blazing roof, think of the workhouse and the emigrant ship—think of starvation, death, and coffinless graves—and then tell me to-day will you be true to the teaching of our friends in prison? Shall one generation witness two such scenes as '47? God forbid. I call upon every one of you who can to-day to do everything in your power to prevent it. Organise for the protection of your own rights—combine that you may offer an unbroken front to the common enemy. Surely it is your time when your best and bravest are in prison—now, when liberty of speech is proscribed in the land—now, when the spectres of famine and death are standing by your thresholds. I appeal to one class of the community—I appeal to the men of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and I ask them are they content to remain or to become the destroyers of their own kith and kin? Look at a possible picture—look at your own brother lying in yonder ditch dead and naked; the last garment was sold to buy a measure of milk for the poor child in whose body the teeth of the lean dog are now fastened. Are you human nature? Can you look upon such scenes, strong men as you are, without feeling your knees tremble and a curse gurgling in your throats?

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Need I remind you that in '47, when you were called on to do work similar to that with which you are now threatened, when one of your force fired upon an unoffending crowd, to find five minutes later that his bullet had lodged in the breast of the mother that bore him? You are Irishmen, and I doubt not that beneath many a policeman's jacket a warm Irish heart beats. Are you content, then, to be the destroyers of your own people, or will you rather join hands with them and snatch victory from death, and save the lives of the people? As for you, friends, your course is clear. Keep before your minds the great fact that the land of Ireland belongs to the people of Ireland. Follow the teaching of the apostles of our creed, who are now its martyrs and its confessors. We tell you here to-day what has been told you from every platform in your county—to pay no rent until you get a reasonable reduction. We tell you to take no land from which another man has been evicted; and should such a mean wretch be found in Mayo to snatch such a farm, go mark him well; cast him out of the society of men as an unclean thing. Let no one be ready to buy or sell with him, and watch how the modern Iscariot will prosper. The loss of each new comrade throws new duties on us who are left behind. Therefore we must all throw off our coats and go to work earnestly in this work. John Mitchel said from the dock in Green-street that there were one, two, three hundred ready to follow him. And Davitt must know in his prison cell to-day that there are, not hundreds, but hundreds of thousands prepared to take up and carry out the work which he began."

Mr. Parnell, who had arrived from Dublin by special train, followed Mr. Brennan, and pronounced that gentleman's speech magnificent, and said the commencement of the great land agitation in spring was the handwriting on the wall for the downfall of the most infamous system the world had ever seen. At Swinford, on another occasion, soon afterwards, Mr. Parnell declared that the Government had arrested Mr. Davitt because he had shown by his power of organisation that he was a man of great capacity, and likely to make the land movement a most formidable one.

Still, with an eye to the coming elections, the Irish agitators took the advantage of the Government arrests to stump once more the English strongholds of Home

Rule, and arouse the Irish vote. At a Hyde Park demonstration Messrs. O'Connor Power and M'Carthy delivered vigorous speeches. Mr. Parnell, in Liverpool, and Mr. Davitt himself in Newcastle-on-Tyne and Glasgow, continued to lay down their aims, objects, and policy. Mr. Davitt, at Newcastle, declared that so long as he had brains to plan, and hands to dare, or heart to feel for Ireland, so long would he stand the uncompromising enemy of landlordism. Mr. James Daly, one of the accused, also came upon the platform again, immediately on his release on bail, and spoke at Ballagheereen.

On December 5th Mr. Brennan was arrested for his speech at Balla, which has already been given, and on the following Sunday two great demonstrations were held at Castlebar and French Hill. At the former a scene of the most exciting and painful kind occurred. Impelled by a feeling of revenge against the Government for having employed shorthand reporters during the later period of the agitation, it was determined not to afford any facilities to these Government representatives at the Castlebar platform. Application was made by the district constable to give the gentlemen the usual accommodation, but it was refused. Mr. Parnell himself upheld the conduct of the committee of the meeting. The result was that the reporters were placed in front of the platform, with a constable on each side. If it had not been for the action of one Mr. Nally, the reporters would probably have done their duty, and no more would have been heard of it. But Mr. Nally, standing on the platform, pointed out the reporters to the mob, and hounded them on to use violence in order to get them away. The excitement was immense. A collision

between the people and the armed constabulary seemed imminent ; the crowd surged furiously, and the reporters, it was quite evident, were in desperate peril of life and limb. But with cool courage the policemen kept the mob at bay, and the reporters had ultimately to be drawn up to the platform by the very men who had at first refused them admittance. Mr. Parnell's speech went almost further than any of his previous ones. He boasted that the tenants would, by the refusal to pay their rents, save four millions of money, a dexterous incitement to follow his advice, which was supplemented by an order to pay every one but the landlord. Referring to his Fenian associates in the agitation, Mr. Parnell said :—
“There are men in this land movement who consider that the free rights of Ireland must be won by the bloody battle-field and by the sword ; but these men do not take part in this movement for the purpose of carrying out those ideas ; they take part in it to help peaceably to win the solution of the Land Question.”

The last important land meetings of the year succeeded each other as before on a Saturday and Sunday, 13th and 14th December. At Drumsna, in Leitrim, Messrs. Davitt and Killen mounted the platform, and spoke at great length. The former continued his outspoken advice, but on this occasion his language was more than usually violent. “Band them,” he said, “600,000 tenant farmers, and organize openly and above board. Send men to Parliament to serve under Charles Stewart Parnell, and then you may say landlordism is on its last legs.”

At Carrick-on-Shannon all the four prisoners addressed a crowded audience, and Mr. Brennan's language was almost as strong as his celebrated utterance

at Balla. Other meetings were held at Ballina, Mount Party, and Camlough, near Newry, all upon Sunday, 14th, but it is noteworthy that all the exertions of the principal platform agitators were directed to the West of Ireland. In the rest of the provinces the momentary enthusiasm awakened by the presence of Mr. Parnell or Mr. O'Connor Power, seems to have evaporated with the Government arrests.

But as an overwhelming proof of the local character of the land agitation, must be particularly observed the difference between the crime of Connaught and of Munster, in both which districts Winter Assizes were held. In Connaught, Judge Harrison had a tale of social disorder and agrarian crime to tell, which had no parallel in any other part of Ireland, least of all, perhaps, in Munster, where Baron Dowse was the going judge of assize. The crime which Judge Harrison had to deal with bore the imprint of the old Whiteboy offences. The police reported a vast amount of undetected offences. There were many cases of letters threatening to murder, or threatening notices of intimidation to prevent the payment of rent, indicating, as the judge remarked, a very disorganised state of society. To crown all, were the four cases of alleged seditious language. In Munster, however, Baron Dowse, after a more than usual careful investigation of the statistics of crime as compared with the population, came to a conclusion exceedingly satisfactory, for it proved that the infection of the Connaught fever of agitation had not spread with any great virulence. There was no occasion to make the Grand Jury take a gloomy view of the country. The learned judge had heard remarks made that tended to depreciate, and were levelled against, the entire people

of Ireland, simply from the acts of a few, or the acts of many. He was not going to say but that there were a great number of foolish things spoken in Ireland, and a good deal of crime committed in it, but what he wished to say was that there were in Ireland hundreds of thousands of as loyal subjects, of as orderly and well-behaved people, as there were in any other part of her Majesty's dominions.

The approaching prosecutions had evidently no effect upon the energy of Mr. Davitt. Through his exertions entirely the National Land League, of which frequent mention has been made in these pages, was formed in September, and now the time had come when it should swallow up its more timid and less enterprising comrade-association, the Central Tenants' Defence Association. This had been formed in the early days long before the *Irishman* had ever boasted that it had invented Mr. Davitt. But now it was a useless piece of political furniture; but rather than it should be entirely discarded, Mr. Davitt decided to break it up, and out of it to form a plank of the new platform of Land Agitation. No sooner planned than executed. The war-cry of the old Association had been fixity of tenure; but now the world had advanced beyond that idea, which indeed, with some good points, had always before Mr. Davitt's eyes the converse picture of fixity of landlordism, an unendurable thought, and the strongest of all objections. The National Land League, therefore, or, as it may more properly be called, the Western Vigilance Committee, to prevent the payment of rents for the purpose of depreciating the value of land and abolishing landlords, decided to devour the Central Tenants' Defence Association. Fixity of tenure was put last upon the new

programme as a *dernier ressort*, or as a sop to the Cerberus of respectability which still lingered around the old Association. Thus Mr. Davitt at last succeeded in getting the reins of the Land agitation completely into his own hands. With the country aroused, himself a martyr in prospective, the National Land League the Court of Appeal in all land cases, whether reserved or not, Mr. Parnell ready to start for America, and Mr. O'Donnell at work in France, organising a foreign combination against the power of England—all these parts of the great agitation-machine being ready for work, Mr. Davitt doubtless felt ready for his trial, satisfied, at all events, in the event of conviction, that he had laboured long, energetically, and successfully for the good of his country.

Almost the last important events of the political year were the letters addressed to the *Republique Francaise* and the *Union* on the Irish situation, by Mr. O'Donnell, M.P., and the defeat of the Conservative candidate for Donegal, Mr. M'Corkell, by the Whig, Mr. Lea, of Kidderminster, with a large majority.

Mr. Parnell started for America on December 21st, accompanied by Mr. John Dillon, a patriot of the most advanced views, and son of John Blake Dillon, who was "out" in 1848 with Mr. Smith O'Brien.

CONCLUSIONS.



IN the foregoing pages I have endeavoured to follow the track of the Irish Parliamentary and Platform agitator as closely as possible. I have given the *ipsissima verba* of the new leaders of public opinion in Ireland whenever they disclosed the true feelings that prompted their actions, and I have painted, as I believe, the history of the Irish political year in its true and actual colours. It may be said that the sketches I have given of the three political periods of this year are biassed by a party spirit, and therefore untrustworthy. My answer is, that my opinions are undoubtedly biassed—biassed in favour of law and order, of peace and contentment, of the existence of an independent class of landholders, and, finally, biassed in favour of that state of things which makes Ireland's connection with England one of the safeguards of her political future. The extracts I have given of the agitators' utterances must prove to a hitherto somewhat unsuspecting public what is the true origin, meaning, and scope of the present Land movement in Ireland. The leaders stand condemned out of their own mouths, and all that is necessary to bring home the facts is to lay before the world their own confessions, their own views, and their own actions.

My first conclusion, therefore, is that the present Land movement originated in a section of the Society known as the Fenian Brotherhood, and that the prime leader of the plot, whose brain planned and whose energy organised it, was the present Fenian and ex-political prisoner, released on bail, Michael Davitt. Of the truth of this

there is no doubt. Mr. Parnell, in December, at Swinford (see Part III.), stated it as a fact, and beyond his word it is not necessary to go. A careful perusal of the Fenian Devoy's letter (Appendix A), doubtless the combined composition of himself and Mr. Davitt, who at the time was in America, will give the whole key to the new policy, not only of the Land agitation in Ireland, but also to the new departure in Irish politics of the Fenian Brotherhood itself.

The plan laid down in Devoy's letter (see Appendix A), publicly announced in the *Freeman's Journal*, was simply to honeycomb the provinces with organised bodies of men, the exact counterpart of the Fenian Brotherhood, but with none of its secrecy. Ireland, in fact, was to be governed by a large number of small land centres, under the command of a supreme vigilance committee, and the object in view was to depreciate the value of property, to drive the owners of that property out of the country by "constitutional" agitation and exasperation, and finally, to obtain possession of the soil of Ireland in whatever way time and circumstances might point out. "The land should be owned by those who till the soil," that was the banner of the new agitation.

For some months, while the Home Rule party was luxuriating in the pleasures of private quarrels and public discussions, Davitt was busily engaged in taking up the broken threads of the old Fenian conspiracy, and organising the new departure in Irish practical politics. Mayo was the scene of his first labours. Here he was born. Here he was certain of a circle of friends, all ready and willing to engage in the quasi-open combination against the owners of property. Had he not at his back another ex-political prisoner, a Fenian gentleman of distinction,

who boasted that he had had not only the honour of a seat in Parliament, but also the far greater honour of a seat on a wooden stool in an English prison—Mr. O'Connor Power, the member for Mayo? This, then, was the field for Davitt's efforts, and the result amply justified his expectations.

The scheme was well devised and carried out. While Davitt was organising in the provinces, the active Parliamentary party were engaged in obtaining their first object, the final dismissal of Mr. Butt, who had long since been a stumbling-block to their new policy of obstruction. This was obtained by the action of Mr. John Dillon in the Home Rule League. The next thing was to win over to the actual Fenian party (which at this time consisted, as far as I can gather from facts, principally of Messrs. Davitt, Dillon, and O'Connor Power), the advanced Obstructionists, Messrs. Parnell, O'Donnell, Biggar, and A. M. Sullivan. That for a long time Mr. Parnell was unwilling to accept the present crusade against landlords as a solution of the Land Question is evident by his speeches. His idea seems to have been to conduct an agitation in England. As late as the 17th April he held back, but soon after that date he gave in his adhesion to the Fenian policy. On the 20th April, the first fruits of Davitt's organisation became evident in the meeting at Irishtown, County Mayo, where the speakers were, as might be expected, Messrs. Daly, Brennan (of subsequent fame), and O'Connor Power, M.P. From this date the anti-rent agitation commenced to spread throughout the country, and, as I have endeavoured to show, soon displayed signs of how deeply laid and how admirably organised the system was. The great end in view, from the very commencement of the plot,

was to arouse the worst feelings of the agricultural population against the landlords. To blind the public, however, and especially the landlords, the ostensible reasons at first thrown out for the anti-rent agitation were the agricultural distress and the fears of a bad harvest, which was dexterously and emphatically prophesied. But soon the mask was thrown off; the true key-note of the new Fenian conspiracy was boldly struck, and the motto at every extreme Land meeting in the West was the "Land for the people." The cry was taken up throughout Ireland, and the consequences to the country have been eminently disastrous. Mr. Parnell stoutly preached the doctrine of repudiation of contract, and advocated the disestablishment and disendowment of the landlord classes, loudly and ably assisted by Michael Davitt. As the movement grew stronger and stronger, ecclesiastical influence was boldly and openly resisted on the public platform, and the whole agitation culminated in the foundation by Davitt of the enormous Vigilance Committee, known under the name of the National Land League, and the resolutions of the National Convention Committee, deciding to assemble in the course of a year a National Convention of the Irish people.

This was the true scope of the anti-landlord agitation in Ireland during the whole year. In Parliament the Obstructionists attracted the eyes of the world upon themselves for one purpose only, to gain power and influence with the Irish people during the forthcoming agitation and general election. Ably assisted outside the walls of the House of Commons, the energy, the ability, the determination of the Irish agitators has no parallel almost in modern politics. In England, Scotland, and Ireland they spoke and wrote with surprising vigour and

unceasing assiduity. Eagerly accepting help from anyone and everyone, the moderate Home Ruler and the ambitious English Whig eager for a seat in Parliament, alike fell a prey to their unscrupulous machinations. Messrs. Davitt and Co. were going a longer journey than most Irish politicians, but they would be glad of the company of any public man, no matter how short the distance might be for which they travelled together. There was a small inner band of devotees who had determined to push the plot against the owners of land in Ireland, no matter who accompanied them. The people were at their back in the West, and they hoped soon to have sufficient propagandists to infect the whole country.

That the higher members of the Catholic clergy were bitterly opposed to the new phase of Fenianism at the very commencement of the year is evidenced by Archbishop MacHale's and Dr. Nulty's letters in January, (see Appendix) ; and later on, the Archbishop of the West exerted all his influence to disinfect his district from the taint of Irish Nihilism.

That there is distress and destitution in Ireland at the present time is universally admitted. The object I have particularly in view is to prove that agricultural distress is not at the bottom of the present agitation. The movement was a Fenian plot, and there can be no doubt that the bad harvests of the past three years predisposed the people of the West to the infection of wholesale agitation. The true reasons of the distress throughout the country during the past year Mr. Kavanagh, M.P. for County Carlow, has given in a letter to the parish priest of Borris (see Appendix), with a masterly description of the internal economy of the Irish peasant's life. I give other interesting documentary evidence in the Appendix as to

the true reasons of the distress. There will also be found stated a very fair and impartial policy as to the relations of landlord and tenant in the letters of Lord Monck and the Knight of Kerry to their tenantry. Lord Lifford's letter and Messrs. King-Harman and Bagwell's letters to the *Times* are likewise given, and are valuable contributions to the contemporary history of the period. Lord Robert Montague's answer to his tenantry on the question of a reduction of rent, and Sir George Bowyer's letter to the *Times* repudiating Mr. Parnell's policy, will also be found appended ; together with the Government Report of the Local Government Board, and finally, the appeal to the Irish race in America for Fenian assistance, which is the mainspring of Mr. Parnell's journey across the Atlantic.

But before concluding, it may be as well to consider for a moment the probable effect of the events of the year 1879 upon the general election, which cannot now be far distant. In fact, we do not know at what moment we may not be face to face with a very grave crisis. Mr. Parnell has boasted frequently, that with twenty followers like Mr. Biggar he would wrest any measure from England. At the end of last session the English Press was unanimous in declaring that the Irish members were perfect masters of the situation. No one who has read, even casually, the enthusiastic admiration of the agricultural population throughout Ireland for Mr. Parnell, can fail to see that his nominees, as at Ennis, will contest and win many Irish seats now held by moderate Home Rulers. Under the Ballot Act the people will vote as one man for the new apostles of a Land reform, which promises in a short time fixity of tenure and no rents. Not only the West but the South is

honeycombed with farmers and tenants' clubs, all eager for land-loot, and the word will be given to support none who do not join the cry of "the land for the people." The result must be, that in the ordinary course of events Mr. Parnell will find himself at the head of a band of resolute men with one object in view, the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish landlords. Such, unless resisted in time, must be the logical result of the present Land agitation, and it presents the gravest Irish problem to English statesmen which has ever arisen. From the earliest times our English legislators have gone on rendering more and more certain the conclusions they dreaded and shunned. In 1597, Spencer feared that "Ireland was reserved in her unquiet state, that there should come some great scourge on England." And in 1617, Sir Francis Bacon, Lord Keeper, addressing Sir William Jones, then made Chief Justice of the King's Bench in Ireland, said, "They must take care lest Ireland civilised should prove worse to England than Ireland savage!" Finally, Grattan believed that the Union would have the effect of greatly lowering the character of the Irish representatives, and he expressed his opinion in emphatic words. "You have swept away our constitution," he once said to some English gentlemen, "you have destroyed our Parliament, but we shall have our revenge. We will send into the ranks of *your* Parliament, and into the very heart of your Constitution, a hundred of the greatest scoundrels in the kingdom." And now the prophecies of Spenser, Bacon, and Grattan most certainly seem in a fair way of being fulfilled.

It is still, I believe, only the ingrained contempt of the Irish by the English that renders them insensible to the elements of a social communistic revolution preached

before their face. I doubt if any such revolutionary and subversive doctrines were ever preached openly to crowds in any country, unless in the midst of revolution. And strange to say, there is no organ in this country, at the time I write,* to expose the absurdity of many of the principles so publicly and positively laid down. Hence they become axioms with the peasantry, though utterly false—such as that landlords and tenants subsist only in the United Kingdom, being abolished over all the rest of Europe, whereas leases for seven, nine, and twelve years are common in Belgium, France, and Prussia. Again, that Stein and Hardenburg compounded with feudal lords of Prussia for their rents, and gave the lands in fee to the tenants. They were not money-rents, however, that were bought up, but merely feudal services. Such, however, is the ignorance of the people and the carelessness of the public on such important matters as these, that the Irish agitators have had it all their own way for twelve months. If anything I have reproduced or written may tend to the better understanding of the present crisis, and of the dangers and wants of my country, I shall consider my labour well rewarded. I have been prompted to give these pages to the public from a conviction that the true origin and scope of the present Land agitation have been successfully veiled from view by an able and unprincipled band of agitators; and for the purpose of lifting that veil and discovering Fenianism once more lurking in the darkness, I have tracked the footsteps and collected the utterances of Irish agitators in Parliament and on the Platform.

* Since the above was written, *The Cause*, a high-class weekly journal for Irish Country Gentlemen, has been started in the direction needed.

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APPENDIX.

APPENDIX A.

Letter from Mr. John Devoy, of the Fenian Brotherhood,
to the Editor of the *Freeman's Journal* :—

New York, Dec. 11.

SIR,—The frequent mention made of my name in the Irish press in connection with the so-called “new departure” proposed by a portion of the Irish National party, and the very serious errors which have been committed in interpreting the scope and meaning of that proposition, must be my excuse for obtruding myself on the attention of the Irish public. As the *Freeman* has published so much in connection with this controversy, I hope you will enable me to state the case from the standpoint of those responsible for the original proposition.

The question whether the advanced Irish National party—the party of separation—should continue the policy of isolation from the public life of the country which was inaugurated some twenty years ago by James Stephens and his associates, or return to older methods—methods as old, at least, as the days of the United Irishmen—is agitating the minds of Irish Nationalists on both sides of the Atlantic just now, and certainly no small incident has aroused such wide discussion in Ireland for many a day as the publication of the views of the exiled Nationalists resident in New York on the subject. This shows conclusively the importance of the action proposed. All intelligent Irishmen feel that the entrance into the everyday political life of the country of a large class of men with strong opinions and habits of organisation, but who have hitherto held aloof

from it or only acted on rare occasions when a principle was considered at stake, would be an event that would largely influence the future of Ireland. The eagerness with which the subject has been discussed by all parties would prove this if it were not otherwise sufficiently evident, but, as might be expected, much difference of opinion exists as to the direction that future would take. Almost every newspaper in Ireland which has written on the subject, almost every man who has expressed his opinion, has done so from a purely partisan standpoint. There have, it is true, been notable exceptions, and, on the whole, the reception of the proposals has been encouraging to the proposers.

As it is a question of public policy to be carried out if adopted, within the limits of the existing law, it can bear the fullest discussion. In fact, the more it is criticised the better, provided the criticisms be based upon actual facts—the propositions made and the views expressed by the proposers—not on data supplied by the fancy of the critics, or phantoms of sinister motives conjured up by diseased imaginations. Fair and free discussion of the public policy proposed for the acceptance of the National party by men who certainly have a right to their opinions and some claim to a voice in the decision—fair and free discussion of their motives in proposing it, I, as one of those responsible, am prepared to meet in a frank and friendly way. To those who resort to misrepresentation and insinuations of unworthy motives, I will only say that my motives are sufficiently known to my fellow-workers, and I do not propose to defend them. They will bear comparison with those of some who have been rather hasty in resorting to personalities. The policy proposed must stand or fall on its own merits. I would remind some of my “Nationalist” critics, however, that misrepresentation on the part of men who live by scribbling cheap treason, and who never stir a finger to do any real service to the cause for which they profess such zeal, may, if persevered in, provoke a retaliation that would be somewhat inconvenient to them, and not at all edifying. This is all the notice I propose to take just now of the “consistent” patriots who pen the twaddle about “Fenians in Parliament” and the silly impertinences about “American babble.”

That the discussion aroused on both sides of the Atlantic by the proposal of a “new departure” has done good, I am prepared to admit, but so many mistakes have been made on your side of the water, and such an amount of misrepresentation indulged in, that a

clearer explanation of the objects sought to be attained and the principles professed by the proposers is necessary to enable the Irish people to form a correct judgment on the question. I am convinced that on the judgment formed on this question by the Irish people, and on the action that judgment will dictate, depends Ireland's political future for many years to come. Even at the risk of having merely ambitious motives attributed to me, I am determined that some recent utterances of mine on the subject of Parliamentary and municipal representation and on the Land Question, which have been rather freely commented upon, shall be fully understood, at least by those who care to understand them, so that they may not be made the excuse for preventing action approved of, in theory, by the majority of Irish Nationalists, but not carried into effect through fear of affording help to a certain class of trading politicians. These politicians, it is feared, might succeed in turning the National party into a mere machine for their own advancement if the "new departure" were adopted, or if any other public policy were determined upon. I am as much opposed to allowing the National party to be used by worthless aspirants for Parliamentary honours as I am to see it made an instrument for the circulation of the nauseating cant about nationality served up by trading speculations calling themselves "National" newspapers, or that its only public appearances should be when called to applaud the bunkum of "orators" who keep their tongues and their hands rather quiet when times of danger come. There is intelligence enough in the National party to save it from the Parliamentary shams, just as it has intelligence enough to stamp as quacks and charlatans those who talk of fighting, and sedulously avoid preparation for it. I am convinced that these fears of the Parliamentarians, where they are honestly entertained, are groundless now, while I fully admit there was ample excuse for them in the past.

It is the abstention of the Nationalists as a body from the public life of Ireland which gives trading politicians a chance of using a large number of them locally for personal ends, and it is simply ridiculous to say that, individually, the majority of the Nationalists do not take part in elections of all kinds. But they do not enter the political arena as an organisation, with a programme and policy of their own. They scatter themselves according to their personal tastes, and generally vote for the party which comes nearest to their own in its professions, very often without regard to the personal

merits of the candidates, or thinking of the consequences of endorsing them. The result is that the advanced National party exerts less influence over the current of public events in Ireland, less influence in determining the opinion of the world as to Ireland's wants and wishes, than its numbers would entitle it to if it took its proper share in public life and was organised for public action.

This fact must be apparent to every thinking Nationalist, and many of the best men in the party have expressed themselves very strongly on the subject in recent years. It has been long felt by many that the policy of abstention from public life is a policy of effacement, a policy which multiplies the difficulties in the way of Irish independence, and gives enormous advantages to the friends of English rule. It is somewhat like the old story of the Irish warriors who thought it cowardly to wear armour, and were trodden down by the mail-clad Norsemen as a consequence of their foolish pride. A general whose ambition is to beat an army superior in numbers to his own and infinitely better appointed may be a very chivalrous fellow, but he never wins battles, and he goes down to posterity as an arrant fool, if his name goes down at all.

It has long been a notorious fact, that men who represent but a small minority of the population claim to represent Ireland, and that circumstances would seem to justify them in doing so. Nationalists who have lived all their lives in Ireland, and who knew exactly how these things are done, but very little of what foreigners think of Ireland, can scarcely realise the immense moral effect produced by this state of things in foreign countries—even in the United States—in favour of English rule in Ireland. This effect tells principally where the Nationalists would least wish that Ireland should be misunderstood, and when Ireland's actual condition is taken into account the result is simply disastrous. England's difficulty is only Ireland's opportunity, if Ireland knows how to use it. Self-reliance is a very necessary quality in a people desirous of winning their freedom, but a disarmed people can have little of it, and Ireland cannot afford to disregard the opinion of Continental Powers whose interests clash with those of England. Notwithstanding the innocent confession of gross ignorance made by one of the clever people who want us to stick to the time-honoured rat-hole policy, foreign Powers do judge of us "by the number of our votes and the eloquence of our representatives"—that is, when they see no armed force whose power has been tested in the field on which to base their calculations. It is

not very likely that the "Lees" of the National movement can provide the latter, and as there is no other means of enlightenment, it might be well for those self-sufficient individuals to learn a little of the rudiments of politics before undertaking to give lessons to men who have long ago passed that stage. People with narrow minds cannot be expected to take a broad view of anything, and therefore it is not surprising that another oracle, whose only feat in the National movement has been the accumulation of a mass of paper that may take fire some day, and endeavouring to hoodwink Irish American Nationalists should pronounce the "new departure" a "rag baby." Very appropriate title from a man of straw! This kind of impertinence comes in all cases from men who are now doing nothing, but who have in the past done a good deal of "agitating" in public.

The object aimed at by the advanced National party—the recovery of Ireland's national independence and the severance of all political connection with England—is one that would require the utmost efforts and the greatest sacrifices on the part of the whole Irish people. Unless the whole Irish people, or the great majority of them, undertake the task and bend their whole energies to its accomplishment—unless the best intellect, the financial resources, and the physical strength of the nation be enlisted in the effort—it can never be realised. Even with all these things in our favour, the difficulties in our way would be enormous, but if firmly united and ably led we could overcome them, and the result achieved would be worth the sacrifice. I am not one of those who despair of Ireland's freedom, and am as much in favour of continuing the struggle to-day as some of those who talk loudest against constitutional agitation. I am convinced that the whole Irish people can be enlisted in an effort to free their native land, and that they have within themselves the power to overcome all obstacles in their way. I feel satisfied that Ireland could maintain her existence as an independent nation, become a respectable Power in Europe, provide comfortably for a large population within her borders, and rival England in commerce and manufactures. I contend she can never attain the development to which her geographical position, her natural resources, and the moral and intellectual gifts of her people entitle her, without becoming complete mistress of her own destinies and severing the connection with England. But I am also convinced that one section of the people alone can never win independence, and no political

party, no matter how devoted or determined, can ever win the support of the whole people if they never come before the public and take no part in the every-day life of the country. I have often said it before, and I repeat it now again, that a mere conspiracy will never free Ireland. I am not arguing against conspiracy, but only pointing out the necessity of Irish Nationalists taking whatever publication for the advancement of the National cause they may find within their reach—such action as will place the aims and objects of the National party in a more favourable light before the world, and help to win the support of the whole Irish people.

I am met at the very outset by the assertion that this entrance into the public political arena would simply result in bringing forward a number of dishonest and insincere politicians who would sell the people. My only answer is that if this be true it is simply a hopeless task to attempt to free Ireland, and that if Ireland got free by chance these men will then be just as willing to sell themselves or their country. If the country is so sunk in corruption that honest men cannot be found to fill the public offices and representative positions, why continue a useless effort? On another hand I hear a lot of familiar stuff about the "stern work" required to make revolutions. I am as ready for the stern work as some of the gentlemen who write so eloquently about it, but that stern work will never be done if *other* work, of a more prosaic, perhaps, but none the less necessary, kind be not done before the time comes for sternness. The stern work will certainly never be done if we confine ourselves to writing eloquent sentences about the "true path," and provide ourselves with nothing sterner to work with than sharp pens.

The cause of independence is not served—no cause is served—by a policy of inaction. If men who subscribe to the doctrine of independence are given nothing to do—if they are only required to be ready for an emergency which is to come at some future day—they will waste their time uselessly, for while they are waiting the rest of the world is moving, and they will not have the people with them when they want them. They must recognise that there is work for to-day and to-morrow as well as for the distant future.

Those who propose the new departure merely want to provide good wholesome work for the National party, which will have the effect of bringing all sections of Nationalists into closer relation by giving them a common ground to work upon, a platform really broad enough for all to stand upon, demanding no sacrifice of principle,

policy," the "only pure path," has simply no foundation in fact. John Mitchel was the first man of any note to preach the doctrine that "no good can come to Ireland from the English Parliament ;" but even he advocated interference in Parliamentary elections on certain occasions, and died member for Tipperary. That he would not take the oath no man who knew him has any doubt, but he numbered among his friends many men who did take it, notably George Henry Moore, John Martin, and Joseph Ronayne. John Mitchel simply wanted to turn the people's attention to the final means to be used to attain National independence, but he did not advise or practise continuous abstention from Parliamentary agitation. Some of us who are now criticised, not to say abused, for "departing from the true path," by men who are not following any path at all, have had much better opportunities of learning to the fullest extent what John Mitchel thought on this subject than those who now undertake to speak for him, and we are even presumptuous enough to have views of our own.

Even if there were a "traditional policy," a "beaten path," some of us would take the liberty of going outside of one or the other if by doing so we thought we could advance the National cause. For myself, I must plead guilty to a strong disinclination to walk in the narrow "paths," or "tracks," or "grooves," marked out for my guidance by people whose ability for leadership, whose earnestness, and whose judgment I have the best reason to doubt. I yield to no man living in the lengths I am prepared to go to get rid of foreign domination in Ireland, but I refuse to be guided by the narrow dogmatism through the instrumentality of which a few pigmies managed for a sad decade or so to retain a leadership for which neither nature nor training ever fitted them. I want to see the national will consulted through the only means at present available, and when the country speaks I am not afraid of the result, for I am convinced that Ireland desires independence to-day as ardently as ever, and that nothing less will ever satisfy her. But it is simply absurd to ask the Irish people to follow a dangerous political course with their eyes blindfolded, and trusting implicitly in guides of whom they know nothing. I am willing to trust the people, and think the issue is safe in their hands. When the country is convinced of the necessity for vigorous and decided action, I am not one of those who think the responsibility will be shirked. It was not the people who failed in recent National movements, but

those who, without the capacity, the judgment, or the courage necessary to lead the people in times of trial and danger, assumed the responsibility and broke down when the ordeal came. The Irish people have had more than enough of this kind of thing, and want no more self-appointed leaders, or men labouring under a hallucination that they were born with a mission to regenerate them.

When the Irish Republican Brotherhood was started, the prevailing feeling among the people was distrust of Parliamentary agitation, and of noisy agitators of all kinds. The collapse of the Tenant-right movement, and the treachery of Keogh, Sadleir, and their infamous *confreeres*, had given a shock to the people from which it took them years to recover. They were in a state of political torpor. I may be told that Fenianism took them out of this lethargy and infused a soul into Ireland. It did nothing of the sort. It found the National spirit reviving; it was, in fact, one of the effects of that revival, and it turned the re-awakening spirit into a certain channel. Whether this was fortunate or not I will not discuss just now; but I have too keen a recollection of the period, know a little too much about the spirit of the young men of that time, to be led away by the claptrap which passes current among a certain number of enthusiastic young men for historical fact, having the simple object of bolstering up the reputation of one of those heaven-sent leaders with whom we are sometimes blessed. Among the Nationalists of that day the doctrines of John Mitchel prevailed. They had drunk deeply during the years of inaction of the literature of Young Ireland, and the boldest and most outspoken of that school was a decided favourite. He continued to address them after his escape from prison through the National papers in Ireland long after the other Forty-eight leaders had laid down their pens and ceased to work. The young men were ripe for the hand of the organiser, and their future course depended on the impulse then given. Besides, there were many reasons why at that period Parliamentary agitation should be discouraged; but I may be permitted to express my conviction that the discouragement was carried very much too far, and great mischief was done in consequence. The fact, however, is undeniable, that the policy of complete abstention was a "Fenian" policy only, and that it was never, previous to the starting of Fenianism, the settled policy of the National party, though, naturally, the attention of men seeking separation was turned principally to physical force methods.

It is equally true that the advanced National party in Ireland has never had a clearly-defined policy, further than a declaration in favour of independence, or, sometimes, an independent republic, to be obtained by force of arms. The people have never been told what kind of an Ireland we should have if the making of it depended on the Nationalists, or how the Nationalists proposed to grapple with any of the burning social and political questions which would demand solution if the country were free to-morrow. The national sentiment of the people alone was appealed to, especially in the Fenian movement, while their judgment as to the capacity of the men proposed to regenerate them was left entirely out of the question. Of course, the people had many opportunities of forming an opinion on these points through public speeches and writings; but in this respect the constitutional agitators, honest or dishonest, had many advantages over the extreme Nationalists, inasmuch as public profession of their principles or intentions brought the latter into conflict with the law. The lack of political training and of practical acquaintance with public business—such even as could be acquired by membership of a town council—has always told heavily against the Nationalists, while their absence from such bodies left the whole country in the hands of the West Britons, who are only a miserable minority. This enabled the minority not alone to speak and act in the name of the country, but gave its members the means of strengthening and consolidating their party and crushing out their opponents. The more this is examined, the more ruinous this policy of isolation will appear, and the more advantages to be derived from an organised, steady, and persistent effort to get possession of those local bodies will be seen. While I admit that Nationalists now vote at these elections, I deny that they act as a body, or with any settled plan or purpose.

With the majority of these bodies in our possession, even without the Parliamentary representation, we should be in a position to do many things we can only dream of now. With the municipal bodies and men of spirit and determination as Parliamentary representatives, backed by the country and by millions of the Irish race scattered over the world, there would be no necessity to go to London either to beg or to obstruct, and Irish Nationalists would have no more Tallaghts or "cabbage-gardens" flung in their faces.

Can this be accomplished? I claim it can, but only by a combination between all sections of Irish Nationalists—between all

those who are dissatisfied with the existing order of things, and desire self-government in any form. The Home Rulers cannot do it, for no one among the people really believes in Mr. Butt's so-called "Federal" scheme. The Nationalists cannot honestly support the scheme, for it gives to the English Parliament the prerogative which belongs to the Irish people of calling the proposed local Parliament into existence and defining its powers—therefore having the right to abolish it by a simple act. It is a concession of England's right to rule Ireland. It is claimed that it would place Ireland in exactly the same position towards the British Empire that the State of New York holds towards the United States. This is such an astounding blunder that it is almost incredible it can be seriously made. New York is one of a number of independent States bound together in a federation; it elects its own Governor and Legislature—which existed prior to the federation—and has an army of National Guards, under command of the Governor, to defend its liberties. On the contrary, Ireland under Mr. Butt's plan would bear exactly the same relation to England as the City of New York does to New York State. The municipality of New York is created and its powers defined by the State Legislature, and the charter is tinkered up afresh every time there is a change of parties in the Legislature. The Nationalists can never consent to have Ireland placed in such a position, and therefore the Home Rule movement, except it changes its programme, can never command the support of the whole country, without which it can never hope for success.

The Repealers can never again arouse the enthusiasm of the people, because, though having a strong historical point in their favour, simple Repeal would restore the Irish House of Lords, which few in Ireland would endure now. The Repealers furthermore are not organised, and many of them, as well as many weak-kneed Nationalists, support the Home Rulers for want of something better. In fact, the whole rank and file of the Home Rule party is composed of men who would prefer a larger measure of self-government if it could be obtained.

The Nationalists could only obtain control of the local bodies and of the Parliamentary representation by the adoption of such a broad and comprehensive public policy as would secure the support of that large class of Irishmen who now hold aloof from all parties, but are Nationalists in heart and feeling, and vote for the man or the party that comes nearest to their ideas, and which would further detach

from the Home Rule party all who are really in favour of a larger demand than that of Mr. Butt, but who now give the Home Rulers a conditional support.

The object, however, could be reached much more easily by an honourable compromise. This compromise is only possible by leaving the form of self-government undefined—putting off the definition until a really representative body with the country at its back, and elected with that mandate, could be assembled and speak in the name of the nation. When the nation speaks all parties must obey, and a united Irish nation can shape its own destiny. There is no use defining the form of self-government for the mere purpose of bringing forward a motion in Parliament once a year or once every session, only to be thrown out by a hostile majority, and complete independence cannot be demanded without coming into conflict with the law. As the battle of Irish freedom must be fought outside Parliament, and as Home Rulers, Repealers, and Nationalists all call the form of autonomy they desire “self-government”—as, in addition to this, they agree substantially as to the present needs of Ireland, there should be nothing to prevent them agreeing on a common platform which would bind them together for the common good of the country, till the country itself should speak in such a manner as to command the allegiance of all.

Such a common platform was suggested in the cable despatch from New York, which has been called the “new departure.” The talk about the “folly” of publishing the substance of this telegram is almost too silly to waste words upon. It is simply the height of folly to imagine there was anything to be concealed in it. There was nothing proposed which is not strictly within the law, and no man in Ireland would have the slightest reason to fear the consequences of avowing his acceptance of the propositions. They would not bind a member of Parliament to accept the revolutionary policy, nor could he be held responsible for threats or speeches of the proposers in the United States. They simply bind all who accept them to carry them out, and the carrying of them out breaks no British law. It is not an “alliance” between Home Rulers and revolutionists which is proposed, but the adoption of a broad and comprehensive public policy which Nationalists and men of more moderate views could alike support without sacrifice of principle.

No party or combination of parties in Ireland can ever hope to win the support of the majority of the people except it honestly pro-

poses a radical reform of the Land System. No matter what may be said in favour of individual landlords, the whole system was founded on robbery and fraud, and has been perpetuated by cruelty, injustice, extortion, and hatred of the people. The men who got small farms in the time of confiscation settled down in the country, and their descendants, no matter what their political party, are now "bone of our bone"—have become Irish—and perform a useful function in the land. No one thinks of disturbing them. If the landlords had become Irish, and treated the people with humanity, the original robbery might be forgiven—though a radical change in the tenure of land must come of itself some day—but when, as a class, they have simply done England's work of rooting out the Irish people; when the history of landlordism is simply a dark story of heartless cruelty, of artificial famines, of evictions, of rags and squalid misery, there is no reason why we should forget that the system was forced upon us by England, and that the majority of the present landlords are the inheritors of the robber horde sent over by Elizabeth and James the First, by Cromwell and William of Orange, to garrison the country for England. It is the interest of Ireland that the land should be owned by those who till the soil, and this could be reached without even inflicting hardship on those who deserve no leniency at the hands of the Irish people. A solution of the Land Question has been reached, to a large extent, in France, in Prussia, and in Belgium, by enabling the occupiers to purchase their holdings. Let the Irish landlords be given a last chance of settling the Irish Land Question amicably in this manner, or wait for a solution in which they shall have no part.

Let a beginning be made with the absentees, the English lords and the London companies who hold stolen land in Ireland, and there will be enough of work for some years to come. Let evictions be stopped at all hazards, and the rooting-out process come to an end. But I shall be told the English Parliament will never do any of these things. Then, I say, these things must only wait till an Irish Parliament can do them better; but in the meantime good work will have been done, sound principles inculcated, and the country aroused and organised.

To those who are alarmed at language like this in regard to the Land Question, I would say: "Look at France, at Prussia, and at Belgium, and you will find that the secret of their prosperity lies in the number of tillers of the soil who own their holdings. Listen

to the mutterings of the coming storm *in England*, and ask yourselves what is going to become of the land monopoly after a few more years of commercial and manufacturing depression—a depression sure to continue, because the causes of it are on the increase.” The English are a very practical and a very selfish people, and will not let any fine sentiment stand in the way when they think it is their interest to redistribute the land. What, may I ask, would become of the Irish landlords—especially the rack-renting, evicting ones—in case of a social convulsion in England? It is a question which they themselves must decide within the next few years. With them or without them the question will be settled before long, and many who now think the foregoing assertions extravagant will consider them very moderate, indeed, by-and-by.

The education question is only approached at present from a purely religious standpoint. There is no reason why it should not be treated also from a utilitarian point of view, not to speak of a National one. The curse of Ireland for several centuries past, after foreign rule—indeed, as a direct result of foreign rule—is sectarianism. It is the interest of the Irish people that the rising generation of all creeds should receive a sound, practical training that will fit them for the battle of life, and enable them to compete with the young men of countries hitherto more favoured in that respect. The natural resources of Ireland will never be developed by men trained as the majority of the present generation have been. Why not insist on the history of Ireland being taught in all our schools, and on the nationalisation of the schools where the Protestants are trained? It cannot be expected that men trained up in anti-Irish ideas will make good Irishmen, nor can it be expected that any large number of Protestants will join any political party which devotes its principal efforts to a purely Catholic object. It is fear of the Catholic majority more than love of England which makes anti-Irish Irishmen of so many of our Protestant fellow-countrymen, and if they are ever to be won over to the National side some sacrifice must be made. He must be a dull Irishman indeed who will assert that their aid is not worth having, and anything that is worth having is worth paying for. The price in this case is the exclusion of all sectarian issues from the National platform. This would not produce any miraculous transformation. We must wait for results, but they are sure to come, for the simple reason that it is for the material interest of the Protestants as well as the Catholics that Ireland should govern herself.

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If Ireland were free now one of the first things, after the Land Question, which would demand solution, would be that of county government, and the principle should be laid down in the National programme. The whole people have an interest in the local as well as the national administration, and should have the selection of a county council or board, having much the same powers as the council-general of a French department. The present abortion of county government, called a grand jury, which enables the foreign garrison to look after its own interests at the expense of the people, will not, of course, be abolished by the English Parliament, though it may be tinkered, but its abolition should be demanded, and the principle of the people's right to do their own business, through their elected representatives, clearly enunciated.

While the right to the franchise of every man born on Irish soil who has not forfeited his rights of citizenship by conviction of crime against society should be affirmed, the very least that should be demanded at present is the equalisation of the Irish franchise with that of England.

If a programme such as I have roughly sketched above were adopted and vigorously carried out, its acceptance made the test for election to all offices in the gift of the electors, and the people thoroughly organised for its support, the country would soon throb with a vigorous and healthy life from end to end, and we should at last begin to see the dawn of our day of liberation. It would give Ireland the materials out of which a National Government could be formed, which would command the confidence of the Irish people at home and abroad and the respect of foreign nations. From the very outset it would seriously embarrass the diplomacy of England abroad, and, if carried out with firmness, resolution, and judgment, it would make Ireland count for something in the world even before she won self-government.

It has been objected by some very well meaning people that the publication and explanation of this programme is the avowal of designs that England will take good care to provide against ; but a little reflection will convince any intelligent man that the first public step taken as a result of its adoption would clearly indicate the ultimate object. It would be as clear as the noonday sun to English statesmen ; but England has entered on a career in which she cannot stop, and she can no longer treat us as in the past. That vast agglomeration of hostile races and conflicting interests scattered

over the world called the British Empire has been held together up to the present by favourable circumstances, which are disappearing day by day. It is filled with inflammable material within and beset with powerful and watchful enemies without. It was constructed for commercial purposes alone, is conducted on merely commercial principles, and cannot stand a great strain. It cannot last, and the crash will come as sure as fate. It has passed the summit of its glory and its infamy, and is now on the descent which leads inevitably to ruin. It is our turn now. Our watchwords should be : Patience, Prudence, Courage, and Sleepless Vigilance. Great events are coming upon us, and on the way we demean ourselves during the next few years will depend whether we are to play a considerable part in those events, and build up a nation, or sink in the ruins of one of the broken empires of the world.

No one who looks at the present condition of the East, who considers the inevitable effects of the policy inaugurated by the present Government of England and the settled policy of Russia—no one who has any knowledge of the immense interests at stake—can seriously think that war on one of the largest scales ever witnessed can much longer be averted. In such a war the blood and treasure of Ireland would be poured out like water for the interests of a Power which has robbed us of everything and rooted out and exterminated our people. Ireland would gain nothing by it. It is time to ask shall Ireland have something to say about this expenditure of her vital necessities, and if it is inevitable can she find no better way to apply them? This is a question which Home Rulers as well as Nationalists will be called upon to answer some of these days, and now is the time to make up their minds.

It was considerations like these which dictated the proposition of the "new departure," and this explanation is given so that the Nationalists of Ireland may not be misled by the misrepresentations and the mistakes which have appeared in print in reference to it. They have as yet come to no decision, and I hope when they do it will be a wise one. They must, however, beware of those "friends" of theirs who raise the cry of "dictation from America." No one in America wants to dictate to them; but these gentlemen must pardon me if I respectfully decline the honour of being classed as an "American."

Respectfully yours,

JOHN DEVON,

APPENDIX B.

Letter on the Land Question, from the Catholic Bishop of Meath to the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam, denouncing the "Policy of Obstruction":—

MY DEAR LORD,—Sufficient time has now elapsed to estimate with reasonable exactness the effect produced on the Home Rule controversy by your letter of the 4th January. It seems now generally admitted, that that letter has relieved the country from a mountain-weight of anxiety and discouragement; and that it has, moreover, inspired the nation with fresh courage, confidence, and self-reliance. From the universal welcome with which it has been hailed, it appears evident that it has laid at least the foundation of the re-establishment of concord, unity, and combined harmonious action in the ranks of the Irish Parliamentary party. On many a perilous crisis in our country's history has your Grace's guiding and encouraging voice been heard before. The nation now knows it well, listens to it with respect and attention, and follows it with confidence, because, in no instance, has it ever been misguided or disappointed by it. On occasions, therefore, of discouragement and danger, like the present—when even the best-intentioned can scarcely see their way, and when a false step is fraught with ruin—the nation has learned, by long experience, the wisdom of looking eagerly to the great Archbishop of the West for light and guidance. There is no other authority living in whose counsels it feels it can place such reliance. Therefore, of all men, John Archbishop of Tuam—*clarum et venerabile nomen*—fills the highest place in the esteem, and has the strongest and the most lasting hold on the affections, of the Irish race all the world through. Through no other man, then, could the nation now express, with such dignity and authority, the shame and sorrow with which it has, for some time past, witnessed the deplorable dissensions that seem rapidly destroying the cohesion and integrity of the Home Rule Parliamentary party.

That party is the result of a supreme and a magnanimous self-sacrificing effort made by the patriotism of the nation at the last

general election. It would be a stupid and senseless mistake, indeed, to imagine that, owing to the protection of the ballot, the electors had no risks to run, and no sacrifices to make, in creating that party. But the country remained calmly and patiently reconciled to its sufferings, because it felt that now at least it had returned—not traitors or pledge-breakers—but honest, earnest men, determined to be loyal to the noble patriotic feeling that had called the Irish Parliamentary party into existence—namely, the indestructible nationality of our country. For a long time the nation felt proud of this party. A compact Parliamentary party, skilfully organised and disciplined—counting in its ranks men of the highest intellectual gifts, and of splendid literary and business acquirements—guided by a chief of transcendent talents, and of unrivalled legal knowledge and Parliamentary experience—became a power in the House, which should make itself felt and respected. Under the shadow of that power the country felt that it could breathe freely; it was at once relieved from its normal terror of the coercive and repressive legislation to which it had been periodically liable. Fresh penal legislation in the presence of that party now became morally impossible. In the House of Commons the concord, the earnestness, the self-restraint and self-sacrifice of the members individually were beyond all praise, and the party itself accomplished more than the country could have expected from it. Accordingly, the debates on Irish questions were the most eloquent, exhaustive, and best-reasoned discussions of the session; and Irish genius and talent, if they failed to achieve positive success, at least won the reluctant admiration of opponents. If the party could not at once wrest our national rights from the tyrannical majority opposed to it, it could, and did, compel it to hear the proofs of our unquestionable claims, and to listen to the recital of our wrongs, till our enemies grew ashamed and disgusted at the flagrant injustices which they had refused to remedy. Then on the supreme vital trials of strength which must recur from time to time between the two great English parties in the Legislature, the Irish party could deal out a death-blow to any Ministry that had made itself obnoxious to it.

Isolated Conservatives, or impracticable recreants, with false Whig traitors, showed themselves from a very early date in the Home Rule ranks. But the country quickly detected, and will not easily condone, their treachery, and, as may be presumed, they will not dare to present themselves for re-election to the constituencies

they betrayed. With the exception of an occasional adverse vote on some popular measure like tenant-right, they could do no harm, except through simple abstention. But the entire responsibility of the *schisma amarum in corpore*—of the fatal rent in the Home Rule ranks—rests on the most eloquent, the ablest, and the most patriotic members of the party. These are men of the purest Irish type, in whom will be found combined all the glories as well as the weaknesses of the Irish character. The matchless eloquence, the splendid intellectual endowments, the undaunted courage that have, in every age, elevated and ennobled the Celtic character, are found in them side by side with the impulsiveness, the impatience, the quick and ardent temperament that have ever made combination and union the great difficulty with Irishmen. Hence, dissensions amongst its chiefs have, in all ages, proved the ruin of the Irish nation. But warnings of history will not now be disregarded; for our contention is with honest men, who only require to read aright the lesson that history teaches.

Gentlemen of the "Policy of Activity," your country, addressing you authoritatively through the great Archbishop of the West, challenges the wisdom of that policy, and it warns you of the tremendous account you shall have to render, if persistence in that policy shall lead to the disintegration of the Home Rule party. I do not mean to say that others are not also to be blamed; but you have only to look to your own responsibility in the matter. A peaceful constitutional struggle for the restoration of our national rights, and for the redress of our national grievances, can be carried on only through the efforts and influence of a united Parliamentary party. Now, if the present organisation, which has cost the nation so much, and of which it felt so proud, end in shameful failure, this fact will be taken as conclusive evidence that a united Irish Parliamentary party is a moral impossibility. The nation has been so often and so perfidiously betrayed that, after this tremendous disappointment, it will cease to hope any longer.

It would be a fatal error to assume that on the ruins of the Home Rule organisation you would soon build up a new Parliamentary party, which—because it should be animated with your spirit and guided by your principles—would be immeasurably superior to the *laissez-faire* organisation which it superseded. No doubt a few isolated and enthusiastic admirers would follow you, but the nation would not. It would have no faith in you, and would expect nothing

from you. What guarantee could you give that the impulsive and unrestrained passion that is now creating such deplorable dissension in the Home Rule ranks would not reappear, and with increased energy, in the organisation by which you propose to replace it? It is very hard indeed to conceive how the leading advocates of the "Policy of Activity," with a following of thirty or forty other members of kindred character, could settle into the homogeneous component elements of a party of such indestructible unity and harmony, that on no question, or issue, or policy, there could arise a difference of opinion amongst them. Indeed, such a united "Party of Action" raised on the ruins of the present organisation seems an impossibility. The dismemberment, therefore, of the Home Rule League would put an end for ever to constitutional agitation in Ireland; and the shattered fragments into which it would be broken would soon find that, of themselves, they were impotent and helpless. The first important question we then should weigh with all due sense of responsibility is, what would become of the country in that eventuality? I confess that I cannot see a vestige of hope that would then remain for it.

The three great injustices which our country is at the present moment chafing and fretting most impatiently under, are the grand jury, the education, and the land grievances. Now, it has already passed into a proverb that "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity," and the lessons of history as well as our own personal experience teach us that, whilst we may wrest our national rights by force from the fears of English ministers, they never will be voluntarily conceded by the generosity or the justice of British statesmen. Will anyone, therefore, believe that out of the materials of which these statesmen are made, there ever will arise a Government so magnanimous, so disinterested, and actuated with such a sublime sense of justice, as to bring in bills which could hardly fail to exasperate a large section of their landlord supporters, and arouse the powerful and fierce hostility of their Radical and Nonconformist opponents, purely for the purpose of doing justice to a nation from whose representatives it has nothing to hope or fear? Why, only a short time ago we listened to the loud and deafening cheers of triumph which rang through the columns of the great English newspapers over what they called the total collapse of the Home Rule party. Only a few days later the same great English organs were not afraid to scout our most pressing and earnest demands in a tone

of insolent and defiant scorn that would arouse the indignation of anyone having a vestige of Irish manhood remaining in him.

The result, therefore, of this policy of division will be to make all future beneficial legislation impossible. I have already observed that the nationality of our country is an indestructible element, an essential ingredient in the character and constitution of the Irish race. That patriotic instinct is not only immortal, but essentially restless and active; and its irrepressible aspirations must get vent through some outlet or another. As long as the country believed in the efficacy and practicability of constitutional agitation, the national sentiment put forth its strength in calling into life magnificent and imposing organisations like the Repeal Association and the Home Rule League. But, when the country shall no longer believe in the success of these peaceful movements, this national instinct, which cannot cease to live and be active, will show itself in its most terrible and dangerous form. True as the needle to the pole, it will struggle still for the attainment of its purpose, no longer, indeed, by peaceable and legal effort, but through secret and unlawful combination. Nor will it be deterred by the folly or wickedness of the means by which it blindly hopes to reach the goal of its ambition. Under the influence of this irrepressible feeling, the time will surely come when the youth and the masses of the Irish people will, in the bitterness of their disappointment and despair, throw themselves into the arms of the wildest and most revolutionary form of Fenianism; and, should a chance of success offer itself, or indeed in the absence of all reasonable chance, they will again venture, as on many a memorable and melancholy period in our history, on the reckless and desperate game of striving to achieve the nationality of their country through the arbitrament of the sword.

My great objection, then, to the "party of action" is, that the course they have pursued leads to disunion and to the deplorable consequences following from disunion; and your Grace now emphatically assures us that the country insists that these dissensions must at once be put an end to. On the other hand, it appears to me quite clear that it is not the "policy of obstruction" itself, but the abuse and misapplication of that policy, that have led to these dissensions; and therefore that if the members of the Home Rule party meet each other in a friendly, conciliatory spirit, and hear each other patiently and respectfully throughout, they will find—and find to the inexpressible delight of the country—that there is no essential

or fundamental difference between them at all; for a policy of blind, indiscriminate, and undiscerning opposition to all legislation, is not only undignified, but irrational, and no member of the Home Rule League would advocate it. No deliberative assembly in the world, with any regard for its own character or dignity, would for a moment tolerate it. Even if it were practicable, it would require such exceptional fearlessness and unflagging perseverance and pluck to carry it out, that very few would be found willing to adopt it. And the few who would make that reckless venture might indeed attract attention, create a sensation, and give a vast amount of vexatious annoyance; yet there is no deliberative assembly existing that would not legally (or illegally) contrive, sooner or later, effectively to rid itself of them. In the meantime, being weak, and, as men would say, unreasonable, their utmost efforts would be fruitless and sterile; for they could not appeal to the generosity, the justice, the interests, or even the selfishness of the majority opposed to them. It is true there is a chivalrous element in the Irish character that would heartily admire and applaud the brilliant but desperate efforts of a gallant few who would struggle bravely for a just cause against fearful odds, unawed and undismayed by the scowls or the sneers of the tyrannical majority confronting them; but that admiration, no matter how exciting or sensational, would not be the genuine popularity which one might reasonably desire, but the notoriety which every prudent man should avoid. Fearlessness combined with prudence and discretion is true courage, and courage alone merits popularity; but fearlessness without discretion is rashness, and rashness may make men notorious but not popular.

The true "policy of obstruction" must not be confounded with its rash, its fruitless, and sometimes sensational abuses and misapplications, which no sane man would advocate. The only genuine policy of "Parliamentary obstruction" is essentially thoughtful, discriminating, and judicious, and, from its very nature, can be resorted to but rarely, and always in exceptional circumstances—never except under the pressure of grave and serious necessity. In every session of Parliament frequent occasions will arise, from time to time, in which this policy can be safely, laudably, and successfully resorted to; but nothing short of the collective wisdom and intelligence of the whole Home Rule party, acting *conciliariter*, can pronounce a satisfactory and an authoritative judgment on the questions and the occasions in which that policy can be resorted to with dignity and success.

Individual members, or any number of isolated individual members, are not competent to pronounce an authoritative decision on this most delicate and difficult question ; it would be folly and presumption in them, and they would be acting *ultra vires* in attempting to do so.

The country now enjoys the advantage of an able, an eloquent, and incorruptible press, which splendidly defends our political and religious interests. The nation feels proud of its press, and is deeply grateful for the invaluable services it daily renders to it. Yet I think that the most eloquent and most distinguished newspaper writers are still more incompetent than ordinary members of Parliament to pronounce a safe or satisfactory judgment on questions such as these. Because, firstly, their opinion must be, from the nature of their vocation, essentially unsettled, unsteady, and not well-defined, veering round, as they must, with the various changes of public opinion, which they often guide, but which they are sometimes obliged to follow ; and therefore they are often found dogmatically propounding one nostrum to-day and another nostrum to-morrow, as the great political issue, to promote which—if all is not to be lost—we must recur at once to the policy of "Parliamentary obstruction." Secondly, because the opinions and principles of the ablest and honestest of some of these writers are, quite unconsciously, often so deeply tinged with the "leaven" of Liberalism or Conservatism, that they sometimes recommend a course of action which, apparently at least, seems better calculated to advance the interests of one or other of the great English parties, than those of the Home Rule League.

It appears to me, therefore, that your Grace has proposed, with profound political wisdom and with admirable brevity, the great principle which would not only restore harmony and concord to the whole Home Rule ranks, but which will also strengthen and perpetuate its unity, and restore to it the confidence of the country. These are your Grace's words—"Let unity of action among the members be insured by summoning them in due time for seasonable deliberation in London, whenever great measures for the benefit of Ireland or of the British dominions are about being introduced into Parliament, as well as during the progress of such measures through both Houses. Let all the members, therefore, of the Home Rule party meet frequently ; let them always meet each other in a friendly and conciliatory spirit ; let them hear each other out patiently, respectfully, and dispassionately ; and, after due deliberation and discussion,

let them decide decreterially and authoritatively the great questions and occasions on which they are to put forth their combined united strength, leaving the members free to be guided on other questions by their own discretion, and under a sense of their own responsibility. This principle of action will put an end for ever to the deplorable dissensions which have of late saddened, afflicted, and disheartened the country."

The illustrious chief of whom your Grace has spoken with such respect will be the first to listen with respectful obedience to the voice of his country addressing him through you, and instructing him on the sacrifices and the duties which she now expects from his patriotism and his genius. Indeed, his transcendent talents, his thrilling eloquence, his vast legal knowledge, his splendid literary and business acquirements, have, for years past, been employed and exhausted in the service of his country—in brilliant and successful efforts to redress every form of injustice and wrong that afflict her. His splendid literary productions on Primary, Intermediate, and University Education, are now standard classic works in English literature. They abound with passages of matchless eloquence and beauty, and they present an array of powerful, logical arguments, that make our claims to Christian Catholic education almost self-evident. Then, on the question—not of the enlightenment, but of the very existence of our people—on the vital question, namely, of tenant-right and the tenure of land, his speeches, letters, and pamphlets are of unrivalled excellence, and are daily appealed to as standard authorities by such distinguished political economists as Cairns and MacDonald. Of his services on the grand jury laws, municipal reform, the extension of the franchise, and the late Disestablished Church, we may briefly say *omnia tetigit omniaque ornavit*. But the nation will never forget his brilliant, fearless, and successful advocacy, during the Fenian State Trials, when he stood by his country's side, not, indeed, in her degradation and shame, but in her weakness, her infirmity, and her sorrow; when, in the persons of the brave, enthusiastic, but awfully misguided youths, who threw themselves into the rebellious arms of Fenianism, she expected to pay dearly for their rashness and imprudence. Only the other day we saw him stand in the strength and dignity of his genius and eloquence among the most learned and the most distinguished legal luminaries of the land. Among the very *elite* of the bench and bar of Ireland, he had perhaps no equal, certainly no superior,

and we were not astonished to find that chancellors, chiefs, and judges were formerly his scholars and pupils. Had he looked to the advancement of his own interests with half the zeal with which he served his country, he might, perhaps, now fill an important place among these highly esteemed and highly remunerated legal dignitaries. The country, then, may be politely requested to examine its conscience, and inquire what reward has he received for all his sacrifices and services. It listened patiently whilst he was charged with a policy of excessive caution, of inaction, and delay. If Mr. Butt could prudently have spoken out, he could probably have justified that policy; and it might be found that the maxim sometimes holds as well in politics as in war—*cum cunctando restituit*.

But, in obedience to the voice of his country, that policy will be no longer persisted in. When Mr. Butt was charged, without the shadow of foundation or proof, with corruption and treason, the country felt scandalised, afflicted, and horrified, and manifested, through a thousand tongues, its abhorrence of the vile and baseless charges; and yet, considering Mr. Butt's magnanimity on the one hand, and the acknowledged generosity of that highly gifted but highly impulsive Irishman on the other, the country would not be surprised to find that a firm and affectionate friendship had arisen between both over the ruins of their former misunderstanding.

Gentlemen of the Home Rule Parliamentary party, your country now calls on you, through the illustrious Archbishop of Tuam, to forget and forgive all your past differences and misunderstandings. She does not call on you for proofs or for pledges of your patriotism, your honour, or your loyalty, but she does emphatically demand of you the highest, the holiest, and the noblest offering that a patriot can lay on her altar—namely, the absolute and unqualified sacrifice of your feelings, of your jealousies, and of your misunderstandings.

Believe me, my dear Lord,
Ever yours faithfully and respectfully,

✠ THOMAS NULTY.

Mullingar, 3rd February, 1879.

APPENDIX C.

Letter of Arthur M'Murrough Kavanagh, M.P., on the true causes of distress, in reply to a Letter of the Parish Priest of Borris, Co. Carlow :—

Ballyraggett, Oct. 16th, 1879.

MY DEAR SIR,—I received yours of the 11th inst. on my return from Ross same day, with the manuscript enclosed, to which you refer. Although I am sorry to say there are some of both your premises and conclusions with which I cannot agree, I go heartily with you in your distaste for “newspaper publicity;” but while doing so, I am bound to admit that there are questions upon which, one occupying the public position in which the constituency of the county of Carlow have done me the honour to place me, when asked for an expression of opinion should not shrink from giving it, and giving it with that publicity which its importance demands; and as I cannot, after a most careful perusal of both your manuscript and your note accompanying it, regard them in any other light than a sort of challenge—kindly meant, I am sure—to draw from me an expression of opinion upon the issues raised, I shall endeavour to reply to them as frankly as I can. In the first place, while admitting freely that this is and has been, from various causes to which I shall refer again, a peculiarly bad season, I am glad to say that my experience of the harvest, so far as it has gone, does not bear out what appears to me to be your too gloomy prognostications. I do not think that all the crops are “short in quantity and inferior in quality.” On the contrary, I believe that the cereals are above the average in quantity, and so far as threshing has yet gone, in quality also. You quote the price of oats at 9s. per barrel. I see new oats quoted in the Dublin market at from 10s. to 12s., and tawney oats considerably higher. The potatoes are certainly as a crop far below the average—in some places almost all gone, and in even the more favoured districts far from good. The green crops are as a rule backward, but as farmers know that the bulbs or roots often do not begin to swell till the growth of the tops is checked, it is, I hope, too early to pass a

sweeping condemnation on what they may be. I merely notice these facts because you preface your remarks by a statement of "what (you assume) all admit," and I am bound to guard myself against being included in the list of those who do ; but with this explanation I freely admit, as I have already said, that this is, from various causes, a peculiarly hard season, and it may be no harm for me to try to specify what these causes are. The fear of a bad harvest has, I believe, acted upon many in a way that in better times it would not ; the depreciation in the value of different kinds of stock, almost preventing the sale of them, has been a most serious element in the matter ; so has the heavy fall in the price of wool and butter, commodities upon which many small farmers depend for their profits. These are the most directly apparent causes ; but there are other causes which, although acting in a less direct manner, have been nearly as powerful in contributing to the present pressure. It is a well-known fact that of late years the credit system has been extended through the country to what is, in my opinion, a most dangerous extent. Both money-lenders and shopkeepers have of late years given to the farmers what I might almost call reckless credit. Artificial manure (which, with every respect to the manufacturers, has, I believe, nearly poisoned the country), seeds, clothes, meal, everything that was wanted, was obtainable on credit. Extravagance was taught, and a class of people, who were before comparatively prudent and thrifty, the competition for custom among the traders and money-lenders was so great that the question of security was almost practically lost sight of. The Land Act of 1870 had a very remarkable effect in this way, as it gave the tenant a tangible interest in his holding, which the trader could come down on to secure his debt. I am not mentioning this as a hit at the Land Act, for that very clause giving to the tenant the right to claim disturbance, which was the "crux" of the Bill, I supported myself, and to many tenants it has been an enormous advantage, in enabling them to get credit, so long as it has been reasonably used. But there is no human law that works unmixed good, and to the foolish and reckless it has undoubtedly in that way proved a snare ; but however that may be, of this I am sure, that this unwholesome system of credit must ultimately have worked its own end. It might have been pulled up by degrees without occasioning any very great pressure or panic ; but the opposite has happened. The commercial crisis in England reacted upon the traders in Ireland, and drove

them, if not to realise their assets, to ascertain what they were worth, and to call in the debts owing to them. I believe that gigantic swindle—the Glasgow Bank—if it had not a direct effect on the commercial pressure here, added to it by the general panic which it spread. Fortunately for us our Irish Banks stood firm, and came out of the fiery trial unscathed and honest as the sun ; and in this way the English crisis has had a very powerful, though indirect, effect in aggravating our present pressure. It is, I think, clear as noon-day that if a wide-spread system of credit is suddenly checked it must produce financial pressure, and in the present instance it is not only credit that is almost suspended, but these commercial creditors are taking peremptory steps to recover sums owing to them—some of them debts from six to eight years' standing. They are, no doubt, frightened, and naturally frightened, by the crisis (which I hope has passed its worst) in their own affairs—frightened by the tremendous fall in the price of stock, wool, and butter, and frightened by the gloomy prospects which at one time appeared likely to be realized of the present harvest; and therefore, although I do not agree with them that there is such cause for panic, I cannot blame them for doing their best, according to their own lights, to secure themselves. All these causes acting together, each more or less indirectly produced or connected with the other, have no doubt, produced a crisis which has been driven to a climax by the supposed imminence of a general election. The visitations of Providence have been seized upon by political agitators as a golden opportunity for their own purposes to sow the seeds of ill-feeling and to foment discontent. It is, and has been, the object of these unprincipled and unscrupulous speculators to represent the present unfortunate condition of affairs as a "terrible crisis;" but the terror of it exists more in the danger of their success in perverting the good sense and judgment of the people than in there being any real foundation of truth for their extravagant statements. That such is their object is rendered more clear by their own words. I see that at one of these meetings a speaker is reported to have returned thanks to heaven that the elements were fighting for them. But how a wet and wintry harvest (for such was the state of the weather at that time) could be fighting for an agricultural population, save in the speaker's view of matters, by making their prospects more gloomy, bringing them to poverty, and thereby giving fuel to the embers of discontent which he and such as he were assiduously endeavouring to fan into a

flame, is not to me apparent. Already the seeds have borne fruit in two disgraceful outrages ; but I am bound to say that, lamentable as these are, it is highly creditable to the people upon whose excitable feelings these incendiaries have been trying to work, that the result has not been a larger harvest of crime and bloodshed. Therefore when you ask me whether monster meetings in the case of landlords are calculated to do good or not, I have no hesitation in replying that meetings such as have been lately held, and it is to them you refer, are simply a disgrace to those engaged in them, and certain to produce results the most detrimental to the tenants' interests. You say that no unprejudiced man is alarmed at what the "Inimicus homo" may say at these meetings. Must I remind you that when a principle or a sentiment is announced by a speaker at a meeting, and is not only allowed to pass unchallenged, but received with cheers and acclamation, that that principle or that sentiment becomes the principle or sentiment of the meeting ; and it is no distortion of prejudice on the part of any man, or on the part of the Tory papers, or on the part of the English press, to say that at these meetings, where the mention of her Majesty's name is hissed, where cries of "Shoot the Landlords !" "Drive them out !" &c., are received with cheers and approbation, treason and murder are the only apparent principles present in the minds of those attending them. I agree with you that the heart of the country is sound, and that the majority, if not all, abhor murder and injustice. If it were not so the result of these proceedings would be more lamentably apparent.

If cases, the existence of which you imply, were pointed out—cases of "poor tenants living under a heartless landlord or a grinding agent," who refused to consider circumstances of a pressing nature, and meetings were held to plead their cause in temperate but firm language, as you say, there should be, no man could condemn them ; but in the reports of all the proceedings that I have seen no such case has been instanced ; and I cannot regard a line of argument as fair which tries to extend to a reprehensible and wicked proceeding the warrant or excuse claimed for a hypothetical legitimate one. On the other hand, I believe that meetings and proceedings such as these, discreditable and reprehensible as they are on their own merits, are more likely to injure than to serve the tenants' interest. All parties concerned must, or ought, as you say, to help to bear the burden, and it is not only a landlord's duty, but a landlord's in-

terest, to try, by kindness and consideration, to pull his tenants through a crisis, but by taking the question out of the region of a landlord's private dealings with his tenants which these public meetings, which, I regret to find, you appear to advocate, is certainly doing, the free exercise of forbearance and generosity is prevented, and the solution is limited to the test of legal rights, and I, for my part, can conceive no cause more calculated to prevent the exercise of generosity on the landlord's part than the system of intimidation and menace which has been adopted."

In conclusion, I can only apologise to you for the almost immoderate length which this letter has reached, but the subject was so important that I found it impossible, if I did more than simply acknowledge the receipt of your communication, to compress into shorter limits what I had to say.

I am, my dear sir, with every respect,

Yours faithfully,

ARTHUR KAVANAGH.

The Rev. P. Carey, P.P., Borris.

APPENDIX D.

Letter upon the relation of Landlord and Tenant, from
Lord Monck to the Parish Priest of Whitehall, Co.
Kilkenny.

Charleville, Bray, Nov. 18, 1879

MY DEAR FATHER MULHALL,—My absence in England has prevented me from sooner sending an answer to the memorial dated October 30, signed by yourself as chairman of a meeting, addressed to me by my tenants in the townlands of Gerryduff, Kellymount, Ballinvalley, Coolcuttia, and Cornleigh, and asking for an abatement of rent during the present year. My personal regard for yourself induces me to send an answer to this memorial, but I do so under protest against the practice of making the private dealings between me and my tenants the subject of discussion at public meetings, or of documents emanating from them. I hold that the trans-

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actions between persons standing towards each other in the relation of landlord and tenant are based on particular contracts between man and man, varying in different cases as to their conditions and terms ; and I think that any attempt at changing such arrangement ought to be the subject of individual communication, and not of collective remonstrance. I trust that my conduct during the thirty years in which I have been the owner of this property, shows that I am ready at all times to listen to an appeal from any tenant as to a case of particular failure or misfortune, and that I am willing to forego the exercise of very strict legal rights when the assertion of them would be attended with hardship. I am prepared to act on the same principle during this year, but I cannot admit that the circumstances of the present time, taken in connection with the manner in which my tenants have been hitherto treated, afford any just ground for a general abatement of rent on my property.

The facts of the case are these. No general change of rent has been made during the thirty years for which I have been owner of the estate, nor, as far as I am aware, for twenty years preceding that period. The result of this is that most, if not all, of the tenants now hold at rents fixed fifty years since. The prices of all articles of agricultural produce are now in the present year much higher than they were when those rents were settled. So much for the rate of rent which the tenants are called on to pay. Let us now turn to the peculiar circumstances of the present year. It is within my own knowledge as a practical farmer, and I receive the same account from other sources of information, that the fine weather of the late autumn has exercised an unexpectedly favourable influence on the crops, and that this harvest, so far from being worse, is much better in its results than the last two seasons. I do not admit that the Poor-law valuation is any just criterion of the fair letting value of land. It was not made with a view to any such purpose. It was based on prices of agricultural produce far lower than those which now prevail. It was avowedly, as I have always understood, in the judgment of those who made it, 20 per cent. under the fair letting value, as measured by the low prices which obtained when it was made. It is, however, so often referred to that I venture to compare my rental with its figures. There are on my Kilkenny estates 182 tenants ; of these 126 hold at rents not exceeding the Poor-law valuation. Three tenants hold at rents 5 per cent., twenty-eight at rents 10 per cent., and twenty-five at rents 15 per cent. over the

Poor-law valuation. It will thus be seen that, judged by this test, not one tenant on the estate is required to pay within 10 per cent. of what was considered a fair rent at the time—now nearly thirty years ago—when this valuation was made, and that the occupiers of my land have enjoyed all the advantages of the good times which have occurred in the intervening period, without any increase of their rents. If I had taken advantage, as I might easily have done, of these good times, and the improvement in the prices of agricultural produce, to raise my rents, I should now be in a position to make a large apparent abatement to my tenants, without really bringing the amount which they would have to pay below my present rental. I venture to add that, in my opinion, it is poor encouragement to owners of land, who desire to exercise moderation in the assertion of their rights, to find that after a long period of low rents to the landlord, and large profits to the tenants, they are, on the first approach of depression, pressed for abatements equally with those who, by exacting their rents with more rigour, are able to make a parade of large per centage remissions, without reducing the returns from their property to the level of the ordinary income of the man who has treated those who hold his land with consideration and liberality. Under these circumstances I cannot bring my mind to the conclusion that a sense of justice or humanity requires me to make any general abatement in the rents on my Kilkenny estate. While stating the conclusion at which I have arrived, and my reasons for that conclusion, allow me at the same time to express the gratification I felt on reading the report of the proceedings of your meeting, at the respect for the rights of others which characterised those proceedings in marked and favourable contrast to those of many other meetings which have been held through the country; and to convey to you my acknowledgments for the good will and kind feeling evinced towards myself personally.]

Believe me to be most truly yours,

MONCK.

APPENDIX E.

Address of the Knight of Kerry to his Valencia
Tenantry :

MY FRIENDS,—At a time when there is such a loud and unprincipled outcry, especially on the subject of abatement of rent, on the part of men who profess to be your friends, but who are ready to throw you over the very moment you have served the purpose of their ambitious objects, and when, in consequence, you must be kept in a state of doubt and of ill-founded expectation, I hold it to be my duty to deal with you with the utmost frankness, and to be ready at any moment to explain to any of you, either collectively or individually, in the clearest way in my power, the principle on which, in reference to reduction of rents, I mean to rule my conduct. I shall thus enable you at once to understand where you are, and where you are not, to expect an abatement. And if it is my duty thus to meet you, allow me to tell you that it is your duty to listen attentively, and to weigh honestly what I have to say ; what otherwise would be the use of my being entitled to remind you that my family have held their lands in this same Province of Munster and County of Kerry, for more than 500 years continuously, without its ever, so far as I am aware, having been laid to their charge, that they had dealt hardly with those who were dependent on them ; and with regard to myself, I am also justified in reminding you that I have been personally known to you, and connected in the closest relations with the inhabitants of this Parish, for nearly half a century, and I challenge my bitterest enemy, if such there be, to point out a single occasion on which I have not been as mindful of the interest of the Tenant, as of that of the Landlord. Before, however, I can be in a position to explain my views to you distinctly, it is essential that I should be as distinctly informed on the following points, viz. :—

1st.—What is the precise amount of rent now paid by you and of which you complain ? That is to say, the net amount after deducting from your payments any portion thereof which may consist o

interest or per centage on outlay made by me on improvements, either at your desire, or with your consent, and of which you are now enjoying the benefit.

2nd.—At what precise period did this rent first come into operation?

Informed on these points, although there may be here and there a few cases where special circumstances may necessitate exceptions, sometimes in the landlord's favour, sometimes in that of the tenant, still my rule will be all but universal and at the same time thoroughly simple, viz. :—

Where the rent first came to be fixed at a period of high prices, let us suppose for instance, where they were considerably in excess of those of the last (say) three years, and where the rents were assessed fully in proportion to those high prices, I shall be prepared to make you an abatement.

Where, on the contrary, the rent came first to be fixed at a period when the prices were lower than those prevailing now, no just ground can be alleged for seeking an abatement, and it must be firmly refused. As to the precise amount of abatement, it is impossible to state that with precision, as it may vary with the circumstances of each separate case, and it will be sufficient to say, that it shall be in proportion to the degree in which the prices, at the time when the rent began, exceeded those of this day. I am well convinced that you are intelligent enough to see that in adopting this course, I am doing considerably more than bare justice to the tenant; for, while it is true that the last three or four years have been extremely trying to farmers, owing to bad seasons and to a fall in prices, still is it not equally true that the twenty-five years immediately preceding there had been almost unexampled prosperity—seasons generally propitious—and prices rising gradually, but with scarcely a reverse to a quite extraordinary scale? and if it is just that because of three or four lean years I should share your losses, is it not equally just that I should have shared in the gains of the twenty-five fat years which immediately preceded them? but on the contrary it is thoroughly known to every individual in Valencia that, of the many thousands of pounds which this exceptional rise in prices brought to my tenants, not one farthing found its way to the pocket of the landlord; and am I not further entitled to remind you that had you, during these years of prosperity, exercised the most ordinary prudence, and either laid up in the savings bank, or still better, made a savings bank of your land,

you would have been in a far better position for encountering the rainy day which has, in every sense of the word, recently beset us?

You should also ask yourselves if you have not had it in your power at any time to obtain a substantial abatement without any appeal to your landlord, if you had chosen to devote a reasonable time and effort to the destruction of weeds. It is not too much to say, that we frequently see one-third or more of the produce of a field consisting exclusively of weeds, and you are bound to remember that in such case you are paying one-third of your rent, one-third of your taxes, and one-third of your labour for weeds and nothing else. And I firmly believe, that the gross weed expenses of Valencia cannot fall short of £800 per annum.

In conclusion, I wish to lay before you a few figures, which are valuable, not only as supporting what I have said, but also to enable you to retain these facts in your memory. When in 1855 I first entered into full possession of the estate, which had belonged to my father in this parish, I found it to consist of 4,230 acres, from which, deducting 1,455 acres of mountain pasture of which I myself retained the control, and about 250 acres of my own demense, there remained 2,520, or thereabouts, let to tenants at an average rent of 8s. 11d. per acre. At that time butter, your main staple, was rated at from 60s. to 68s. per cwt. Passing thence over a period of twenty years to the year 1875, I find that the rent had barely risen 11d. per acre, whilst butter had advanced to 80s. and 90s. per cwt. If these figures are not sufficient to establish the moderation of my dealings in regard to rent, it is quite idle to discuss the matter further, and it only remains for me to point out that, during these long years, I have not been an absentee, spending my money in foreign parts; but, on the contrary, I have lived continuously among you, except for a brief period when health compelled me to go to the Continent, and during that time I have expended, in works of substantial improvement in this Island, not alone my Valencia income, but many thousand of pounds besides, drawn from other estates; and I have at least, at the close of my life, the gratifying reflection that, in comparing Valencia as it now is, and what it was when I first knew it, I may safely boast that no equal portion of Irish land has made so marked a progress in the same space of time.

I remain, my good friends, your sincere well-wisher,

P. FITZ GERALD, Knight of Kerry.

APPENDIX F.

Letter on the State of Ireland, November 5th, 1879,
from R. Bagwell, Esq., of Clonmel, to *The Times*.

To the Editor of "The Times."

SIR,—In your article of yesterday you say that the country gentlemen have as yet been silent as to the state of Ireland at the present time. We Irish gentlemen do not find it easy to get a hearing, being in a hopeless minority at boards of guardians, and not represented in civic corporations. As to public meetings, they are called for the express purpose of denouncing us wholesale. Of course, I have no right to speak for my neighbours; but, as an active member of the class referred to, I would ask you to give publicity to one expression of opinion, in which, I think, many will concur. There is as yet no pressure on any workhouse in Ireland. There is no more than the average amount of actual distress in most parts of the country. It is true that the farmers have not had a good time lately, but there has been nothing to ruin them as a body. The harvest has been good on the whole, and the fuel famine which was feared in the turf-burning districts has been in a great measure averted by a fine autumn. Even Mr. Shaw has publicly admitted that this year is better than last; yet he allows the alarmists to use his name.

I do not believe that there will be anything like famine anywhere, but it is possible that there may be great distress in some parts of the West, where the people always live very wretchedly. Many Englishmen know something of Connemara, which is poor enough; but few have seen Erris and Tyrawley, and they must be seen to be understood. Should there be great pressure among these broad wastes, the Government will, of course, be willing to give some help. The experience of 1847 shows conclusively that the best thing to do with starving people is to feed them, and not to attempt relief works. The Government have ample means of knowing exactly how matters stand, and, if they think it necessary, will doubtless promote the formation of local committees. The parish priest, the landlords or their agents, the stipendiary magistrates, and the dis-

pensary doctor, would form a nucleus almost everywhere, nor would Protestant clergymen be backward. Sir C. Trevelyan has told the public how little local help the officials received thirty-two years ago. I am confident that we should not now deserve that heavy reproach. It is often assumed that such relief as I have suggested requires long preparation. Nothing of the kind. In 1847 communications were difficult, and a people hitherto fed upon potatoes had no means of grinding corn or preparing meal. Now meal forms the staple food, and our railway system, though still imperfect, is a hundred times sufficient for carriage. In the wildest districts those who can pay for meal have but to ask and to have. The difficulties born of protection have entirely disappeared.

While opposed to relief works, I believe statesmen might seriously turn their attention to arterial drainage, which would enrich the country. The deepening and straightening of rivers cannot be done by private individuals. The case is analogous to that of town sewerage, where the municipality makes the mains, and the private citizens connect their houses. Money for drainage is lent by the State in Ireland on liberal terms, and there is a power of forming associations by which minorities can be forced to bear their share of the charge. Much has been done in this way, but it imposes much thankless labour on private persons; and there is the further difficulty, that tenants are apt to object to their landlords recouping themselves by increased rent. Any attempt to settle peasant proprietors on partly reclaimed land must end in disaster; the unfortunate men would starve before they could make anything. If there are to be peasant proprietors, and I should rejoice to see many solvent ones, they must have tolerably good land. If there is distress, no doubt resident landlords will do what they can to give employment; but if they do not get their rents, they can do nothing. I firmly believe that the great majority of Irish farmers are desirous of paying their way like honest men. In some cases they have boldly disregarded all attempts at terrorism; but I fear moral courage is scarce enough. I could tell many anecdotes, at once humorous and sad, to illustrate this: two will suffice. The other day a tenant on a large property, where the tenants have been holding back, sent his rent by post, with a request that the fact of his having paid should be kept secret. In another case, the tenant came privately to the agent and paid. The agent put the receipt in the man's hat-band, who, on discovering it, declared that he

would not show himself thus in the street for any money.' Comment is superfluous. I may remind any of your readers who are frightened by the alarmist chorus of a case which came before Parliament a few years ago. It was said that there was frightful destitution in the remote district of Gweedore, in Donegal. A Select Committee was granted against the wishes of the Government, and the evidence showed that Gweedore was in a prosperous condition.

Your obedient servant,

R. BAGWELL.

APPENDIX G.

Letter from Colonel King-Harman, M.P. for Co. Sligo,
to *The Times*, on the State of Ireland :—

SIR,—I have read with great interest the letters of Lord Lifford and Mr. Bagwell and your leading article thereon. As a resident Irish landlord, and as one who has striven earnestly to arrive at a true estimate of the present state of affairs in Ireland, I ask the favour of a space in your columns for a few remarks.

I wish most heartily that I could agree with the gentlemen whose letters appear in *The Times* of to-day, or with that portion of the report of the Local Government Board which expresses a belief that the present system of poor law relief will be adequate to meet the distress which now hangs over a large portion of the Irish people.

I unhesitatingly say that not only dire distress but absolute famine is impending in many parts of Ireland, and I am reluctantly, but firmly, convinced that this can only be averted by Government assistance.

Lord Lifford and Mr. Bagwell are well known as excellent landlords and good men of business, and their evidence, as far as their knowledge serves them, must carry great weight. They write, however, from parts of the country which are, I hear, exceptionally prosperous, and, except so far as Mr. Bagwell refers to the chronic state

of poverty in Ennis and Tyrawley, cannot be taken as giving any idea of the state of affairs in the West.

The statement frequently made that the potato crop is one-half the average certainly does not apply to many parts of Ireland, and such potatoes as have escaped the disease are generally small, watery, and wanting in nutriment. The oat crop has generally been good, and has been well saved, and hay is tolerably plentiful, except in low-lying lands, where it has been destroyed or swept away by the floods, but is of very inferior quality, owing to the wet season, while the root crops are generally miserably poor.

The last few weeks of beautiful weather have done wonders in many parts of the country towards saving the turf, and the fuel famine will not be so general as was to be feared a short time ago. In many places, however, the turf, especially where the bogs are of inferior quality, had already suffered so much from the continuous wet that the recent fine weather came too late to save it.

All this is bad enough, especially when the stagnation of the cattle trade and the low prices for all descriptions of farm produce—with the exception during the last few weeks of butter—are taken into account; but the most serious matter, and the one which will bring famine to the doors of thousands, is the sudden collapse of the credit system.

For several years past credit has almost been forced upon the people; the Gombeen man, or village usurer, has woven his webs in every neighbourhood, and shopkeepers vied with each other in giving long credit for frequently inferior and adulterated articles, but, worst of all, banks have set up their branches in every small town, and have freely advanced money at interest seldom under and often exceeding 10 per cent.

Suddenly, the whole of this ceases; the usurer, the shopkeeper, and the banker flood the country with processes; not a shilling will be advanced, not a mouthful of meal nor a bag of manure will be supplied without ready money.

Well, the majority of the small farmers in the West have no ready money; the large farmers have been so hard hit during the last three years that they cannot pay for labour, and the sequel, I fear, is too simple. In the West, speaking generally, the potatoes will not last till Christmas; the people have not a shilling, and credit for a bag of meal will not be procurable.

What can the people do? They must work for wages or starve.

Who will give the work? Some landlords will, but many cannot; and many, frightened or disgusted with the present senseless agitation, will not. I will not now discuss the political side of the question, nor will I enter into the question as to whether the people might not now be better off if prudence and economy had prevailed in past years. I can only state a sad and terrible fact. Famine is abroad in the West, and I see no means of averting a terrible catastrophe if the Government does not intervene.

I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not ask for wholesale relief, nor do I believe that the state of matters I have endeavoured to describe is the case all over Ireland, but I give it as my sure belief, founded on the closest examination, that there are several districts in the West of Ireland where famine is impending, where the present system of Poor Law Relief will be utterly unable to cope with the disaster, and where, if it be attempted, an additional or supplemental rate will only be the last straw which will swamp many who at present may just weather the storm.

I do not, sir, wish to be an alarmist. On my own property there will be poverty this winter, but I trust no crisis that landlord and tenant, working together, will not be able to tide over; but it will cost us a sore struggle. What I say, however, of other parts of my neighbourhood and the country further west is of my own personal knowledge; and while I deprecate the conduct of those who would exaggerate the state of affairs in more favoured portions of the country, and while I denounce as heartless traitors those who would set class against class and make political capital out of the sufferings of our fellow-countrymen, I deem it my duty to let the people of England know that starvation threatens—nay, is absolutely in the midst of thousands of their fellow-citizens across the Channel. If you will allow me, in a future letter, to make some suggestions as to the best means of meeting the evil, I may be glad to avail myself of the privilege. At present I must apologise for the extreme length of this communication, and trust that the urgency of the occasion will plead as my excuse.]

APPENDIX H.

Letter from Lord Lifford to *The Times* on the state of Ireland, in November :—

SIR,—Were any English gentleman to go about addressing people not to keep their money engagements, were thousands of Englishmen to shout and applaud them, were any English farmers to call out that they would shoot their landlords rather than pay their rents, the condition of honest, happy England would be very much changed indeed ; and this is what occurs in Ireland at present. Let not your readers be alarmed. The gentlemen who spout are Saxons, not Celts ; the people who applaud are, generally speaking, not of the respectable farming class, but of the lowest of the population, and every man knows all the time that law must be enforced, and that he must submit to it. In my own county, I am proud to say, the Roman Catholic priests refused to have anything to say to Mr. Parnell's lawless proceeding, and denounced the delusions practised on the people, and no doubt in time the priests elsewhere who may have degraded their sacred calling will be dealt with by their bishops. We care little here for Messrs. Parnell and Biggar, further than that the confidence reposed in such by a large portion of our credulous fellow-countrymen stamps us to a great extent as unfit for free institutions, still more for Home Rule, which, somewhat modified, would otherwise have many more adherents. These gentlemen are on the horns of the following dilemma :—If their advice be taken by the people the result must be civil, or rather social war—a result most disastrous to the people, but signifying little to its authors, who will slip their heads out of the noose long before matters come to extremity. On the other hand, if their advice be not taken, what will they have effected except to have embittered the relation of landlord and tenant, prevented the outlay of capital at a time when it was most needed, and set one class of Irishmen against another, as is too common in this unhappy country ? But in doing this, these gentlemen and their followers arrogate to themselves exclusively the name of Irishmen, dubbing as Saxon almost every man in Ireland possessed of property and education ; while the fact is, that almost

every Celtic family of known descent is as loyal to the connection with England as the Fitzgeralds, Butlers, Bingham, &c., who settled in Ireland above five hundred years ago. There are not more loyal gentlemen or more attached to the English connection than the O'Neills, O'Briens, O'Callaghans, Kavanaghs, The O'Donovan, Macgillicuddy of the Reeks, The O'Conor Don, and a host of others, including genuine O'Donnells. I, of course, do not include those who may have been originally Scotch MacDonalds, and who have changed their name for the Irish designation. On the other hand, it would be scarcely "Parliamentary" to mention names, but let your readers make the names of those most prominently promoting Home Rule and anti-landowner agitation, and making a little allowance for arbitrary assumption of the letter "O," they will see that, with only two or three exceptions, and those generally the least offensive of their class, those men who so freely denounce what they call Saxon rule and Saxon possession of property, are in reality, for the most part, of Saxon, not Celtic descent. Now, what they may say signifies but little in England, except as regards its immediate and transitory effect; but to the people of Ireland they may use an argument easily answered by reference to history as to its truth, by a glance at the population as to its feasibility, but potent with an ignorant and very credulous people—that the agricultural population, not the owners by law, have the right of possession of the soil. You have allowed me more than once to lay before your readers the historical fact, that under their ancient laws the Irish chieftains, Irishmen other than the then ruling classes possessed no property at all. Sir John Davis, Irish Attorney-General in the reign of James I., after giving a list of the innumerable exactions by which the Irish chieftains had the power of taking at will the entire property of their tenants, if tenants they could be called, who possessed nothing, goes on to say these "made the lord an absolute tyrant, and the tenant a slave and villein, and in one respect more miserable than bond slaves, for commonly the bond slave is fed by his lord, but here the lord is fed by his bond slave." So early as the reign of Edward III. a petition was presented to the Crown from the Irish people, praying that they might be admitted to the benefits of English law; but as Mr. Froude would say, "Another opportunity was lost," and owing to the influence of the English settlers, who found Irish tyranny more to their taste, English law was denied to the Irish people. But now, under those

Saxon laws, for which they prayed, an Irishman who is not asked for rent for twenty years becomes owner of a freehold; but he denies the right to his landlord, whose family may have possessed the property for five hundred years. Hence agitation, insecurity of property, and even of life, absence of capital, over-population, want, and disease. This is the root of Irish evil, and this is promoted by those so-called Irishmen to the utmost of their power. And now, as to that "fixity of tenure" which is to be the panacea for all, I for one have always looked on what are called "the Bright Clauses" of the Land Act as in one respect its most valuable part. If those clauses can once be worked, plenty of landowners will be only too happy to sell: but politically the objection to them is this—that notwithstanding that while according to common sense a man would naturally lay out more on his own land than he would on another person's, yet Ireland being Ireland, it is an absolute, well-ascertained fact, that in proportion to the length of tenure of an Irishman of the tenant class is bad cultivation and consequent poverty, often coupled with subletting and exorbitant rents screwed out of miserable under-tenants. As a landowner, though inheriting but *paupera regna*, I like the Bright Clauses as a measure which will certainly strengthen the security of property, and so do good. As an Irishman who for nearly seventy years has "hoped against hope" that Ireland might one day become as Scotland, once as poor and unsettled, now one of the fairest portions of the British Empire by complete and entire unison with England—as an Irishman I believe that purchases under the Bright Clauses will *quoad* those purchases add to the poverty of Ireland.

I have trespassed on your space too far, but I cannot refer to "fixity of tenure" without telling your readers a story which will at least amuse them. An eminent lawyer was a candidate for the representation of an Irish borough. His principal supporter was a Roman Catholic priest. The candidate had a conscience. The priest was a firm friend. Before attending a meeting of the constituency the candidate announced to his friend that he feared he should lose his election, for he could not conscientiously pledge himself to "fixity of tenure." "Oh," says the priest, "never mind that; I will pull you through." They attended the meeting, and the priest got up and said, "Boys, you know I am the friend of the poor. I always have been so, and I always will be. As many of you as hold land hold up your hands." About half-a-dozen held

up their hands. "Now," said the priest, "as many of you as hold no land, and want to hold some land, hold up your hands." The hands of almost all were held up. "Now," says the good priest, "do you think that I or my friend will support fixity of tenure, which would keep all these decent men out of their land, and leave with a dozen people?" The candidate endorsed the opinions of his friend, and was followed to his lodgings by a cheering crowd.

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

LIFFORD.

Mallow, November 12.

APPENDIX I.

Letter of Lord Robert Montagu, addressed to his Antrim Tenantry, on the subject of the Land Agitation :—

SIR,—On my return to London I received a memorial of the tenants on my estate in the County Antrim, asking for a reduction of rent, and, as you have signed it as chairman of the meeting at which it was adopted, it is through you that I address my reply.

It is a matter of public notoriety that the tenants for many years previous to 1870 had held their farms at rents much under the value, and lower than was paid for land of an inferior quality on the adjoining estates. Yet, as soon as the Land Act was passed in 1870, my predecessor took advantage of its provisions to offer the tenants new leases on his Antrim (but not on his unsettled) property, at rents far below the Poor Law Valuation, and for the longest term permitted by the Act; although by the settlement of the estate he had bound himself not to let the land for less than the fair market value, nor for a longer term than twenty-one years. The tenants did not scruple to exchange their old leases for the new ones.

When I succeeded to the property I instructed my agent to offer leases to my yearly tenants for the longest term allowed by the law, and at the fair letting value of the land (which was to have been ascertained on the basis of the Poor Law Valuation. To this proposal the tenants objected; and they requested that the valuation

should be made by a local valuator, to be selected by themselves. I agreed to this, and Mr. Robert Macartney, who was unknown to me or my agent, was appointed, and he made the valuation. Although, on seeing the result of his labours, I considered his valuation very low, I executed, in 1877 and at various times since, leases at the rents fixed by him. I do not think that these tenants have now any claim on me for a reduction of rent.

I will give an example of the value of their holdings. I have before me an application from a tenant, holding nine acres of land on a lease of thirty-five years, and at the yearly rent of £9 6s. 5d., the Poor Law Valuation being £9, for leave to sell her interest to another of my tenants for £250, about twenty-seven years' purchase ! Am I to suppose that if such a sum is given for a lease at the Poor Law Valuation, every person who desires to become a tenant proprietor must give much more for the fee simple ?

As to the tenants (holding under leases given by my predecessor) who have signed the memorial, a few examples, selected at random, will show the unreasonableness of their application for abatement :—

		<i>Annual Rent.</i>			<i>Poor Law Valuation.</i>		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1.	...	28	0	0	...	36	15 0
2.	...	28	2	0	...	42	0 0
3.	...	32	5	7	...	40	15 0
4.	...	52	0	0	...	63	0 0
5.	...	36	0	0	...	49	0 0
6.	...	44	0	8	...	52	0 0
7.	...	45	0	0	...	62	0 0
8.	...	28	0	0	...	46	0 0

I readily admit that the past few years have been unfavourable to the farmer, and that you, like all others, have felt the depression. I am glad, however, to know that my tenants have been prudent and industrious, and that they have profited by the previous good years.

I do not think there are any more poor people on my estate who require employment on the drainage works which I am now carrying out.

My agent tells me that my tenants (with one or two exceptions, who are certain to pay) have just paid their last May rents without

a murmur. I would fain think that they have escaped the actual effects of an enticing and mischievous agitation by reason of their native good sense and spirit of independence ; while it is only through a feeling of good fellowship with their neighbours that they make a show of resistance to the claims of justice. They know full well that a lease is entered into as a contract which is meant to bind both parties during the whole of the specified term. During the prosperous years, if I had desired to break their leases, in order to obtain an increased rental, they would rightly have cried out against the injustice of such a demand. A bad year has now come, and they, I feel sure, do not desire to apply to themselves a different rule of morality, from that by which they would have judged me.

With regard to the political face of the agitation, I forbear to say anything more than this : It is not by generalities that the destinies of Ireland have to be shaped. The pretext of the present agitation is a desire to increase the number of landlords (for a peasant proprietor is a landlord written small). If it is thought that small landlordism or peasant proprietorship is sure to procure happiness to the holders of the land, let it be shown not only that the few hundred thousands who can become owners, will be really benefited by being landlordlings ; but also that the many millions for whom there will be no land left, and who will thus never have the chance of obtaining an acre, will also be thereby benefited.

I have the honour to remain,

Your obedient servant,

ROBERT MONTAGU.

41 Queen's Gate, London,
December 12th, 1879.

APPENDIX J.

The following is the Official Report made to the Government by the Local Government Board as to the condition of the country :—

Local Government Board, Dublin,
28th October, 1879.

SIR,—The Local Government Board for Ireland have the honour to forward to you herewith, for the information of His Grace the Lord Lieutenant, copies of reports which they have recently received from their Inspectors respecting the state of the potato crop, the general harvest, the sufficiency of the supply of turf which may be saved by the peasantry for their wants during the next Winter and Spring, and the condition and prospects of the poor in their respective districts.

The Board also enclose an abstract of those reports, arranged in provinces and counties.

In regard to the potato crop, it will be seen that there is not much variation in the reports, and that it is described almost everywhere as deficient in quantity, inferior in quality, and affected by blight, and that, upon the whole, there will not be more than half an average crop.

The general harvest appears to be inferior, and the crops deficient and below those of last year.

The oat crop, however, is everywhere reported to be good and plentiful. This applies to all the four provinces, the exceptions in which the general harvest appears to be fair being parts of Donegal and Londonderry, in the province of Ulster ; parts of Cork and Limerick, in the province of Munster ; and parts of Wicklow, in the province of Leinster.

The supply of turf appears to be everywhere greatly deficient, and much suffering and sickness is anticipated from this cause. A considerable quantity of turf is stated to have been cut this year, but it could not be saved owing to the continuous rain ; and although much has been done in that respect during the past few weeks of fine weather, it is to be feared that, in general, the supply is not sufficient to last through the Winter and Spring.

In parts of each of the four provinces it is stated that coal can be

easily obtained at reasonable prices, but this will not benefit the poor in many districts in the western and midland counties where turf is the only fuel used.

In regard to the prospects of the poorer classes during the coming Winter and Spring, it will be seen that in Ulster considerable distress and destitution, as well as increased demands for relief, may be expected, owing to the failure of the turf supply and to scarcity of employment; that in Munster much suffering and want is anticipated, and unusual demands for relief are expected during the Winter months, owing to the want of employment, which is attributed to the straitened circumstances of the farmers in consequence of the banks and loan companies having refused to make further advances of money, and to the low prices obtained for cattle and butter.

In Leinster a large increase in the demands for relief is anticipated, the farmers not being in a position to pay labourers, and employment consequently being scarce. In Connaught also a serious amount of distress and increased demand for relief is expected during the coming Winter. On the coast this is partly owing to the decline in the employment of kelp burning, and in other parts of the provinces it is due to the reduction in prices obtained for cattle and pigs, and to the farmers being deeply in debt to money-lenders and shopkeepers, and to the stoppage of their credit.

With the view of ascertaining the present rate of expenditure in the several Unions in Ireland, the Board directed the Union clerks to furnish the usual annual statement on this subject at as early a date as possible. The returns have not all been received, but the Board have obtained statements from the Unions in which the poor-rates press more heavily than in others, and they annex a list of Unions in which the expenditure in the year ended 29th September, 1878, amounted to or exceeded 2s. in the pound on the valuation, and showing also what the expenditure in these Unions has been in the year that has just passed. In more than half of these cases the expenditure in the year ended 29th September last exceeds the expenditure for the previous year.

The list comprises forty-five Unions, and in eleven of these Unions the expenditure in the year ended the 29th ult. amounted to 3s. in the pound and upwards, viz. :—

Four Unions (Glenties, Cahirciveen, Dingle, and Castlecomer) in which the expenditure was over 3s. in the pound, but under 3s. 6d.

Three Unions (Castletown, Millstreet, and Oughterard) in which

the expenditure has been 3s. 6d. in the pound and upwards, but under 4s. (Newport Union, from which the return has not been received, may probably be included in this class.)

Three Unions (Kenmare, Clifden, and Belmullet) in which the expenditure has been over 4s. The expenditure was highest in Belmullet Union, where it amounted to 4s. 5½d. in the pound, on a valuation of £10,952.

The increased expenditure above referred to was no doubt caused by the additional numbers receiving relief—the numbers relieved in the first week of October, 1878 and 1879, respectively, being as follows :—

<i>Weeks Ending.</i>	<i>In Workhouse.</i>	<i>Outdoor.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
5th October, 1878 ...	43,773	32,951	76,724
4th October, 1879 ...	48,682	35,557	84,239
Excess of 1879 over 1878 ...	4,909	2,606	7,515

Thus showing an excess of 7,515 persons, or nearly 10 per cent. on the whole number relieved. The following statement gives the proportions in which the increase in the numbers receiving workhouse relief has taken place in each province, the percentage of increase being greatest in Ulster, and least in Leinster :—

<i>Provinces.</i>	<i>Relieved in Workhouse on</i>		<i>Increase.</i>	
	<i>4th Oct., '79</i>	<i>5th Oct., '78</i>	<i>Numbers.</i>	<i>Percentage.</i>
Ulster ...	10,261	9,072	1,189	13'1
Munster ...	17,966	16,209	1,697	10'4
Leinster ...	14,975	13,581	1,391	10'2
Connaught ...	5,480	4,848	632	13'0
Total ...	48,682	43,733	4,909	11'2

Although it may reasonably be anticipated from the causes above-mentioned that there will be a considerable increase in pauperism during the Winter season, there does not seem to be any reason to apprehend that the resources of the Poor Law Unions will in general be unequal to the demands on them; but in some of the Unions referred to, in which the expenditure has already reached sums such as 4s. and 4s. 5d. in the pound, the strain on the Poor Rates will, no doubt, become excessive if employment is not to be obtained by the labouring classes, and if there should be a much greater demand for relief. The want of employment and the deficient supply of fuel are the two principal features in the accompanying reports which the Board submit for his Grace's consideration, and both subjects are of vital importance at the present time, as affecting the prospects of the poor during the coming Winter, and the circumstances of many of the ratepayers in distressed districts.

By Order of the Board,

B. BANKS, Secretary.

To T. S. BURKE, Esq., &c.,
Dublin Castle.

APPENDIX K.

Letter from Lord Dunalley to *The Express* (Sept. 3), on
Absenteeism and Peasant Proprietors.

SIR,—It is unreasonable to hold the parties who are now agitating questions connected with the occupation of land, answerable for all the violent and revolutionary sentiments that may be expressed by individuals. There is a great substratum of truth and justice upon which the edifice of complaint and disaffection is being rapidly accumulated; and the business of a statesman is to distinguish the real from the imaginary grievance, and that of the legis-

lature to remove the former. It is no more to be expected that this can be done by the mere force of argument, than the Turkish question or the Egyptian (both connected intimately with the question of the occupation of land) can be thus arranged. Pressure is, unfortunately, as necessary now as it was in the times of shipmoney. The power of imposing an arbitrary tax, which we landlords enjoy, is, if abused, just as intolerable as the same power when exercised by the Crown. It is rendered endurable in our case by the reflection that there is a superior power to which appeal may be made—that of Parliament. But if Parliament refuses to apply a remedy, where its interference is shown to be necessary, it has no right to express astonishment and indignation when reminded (rudely, perhaps) that "*Qui non vult judicare cessa require.*" It is not, however, on the subject of high or low rents that I now address you, but I write in the hope that attention may not be drawn away by the discussions now going on from other matters connected with land tenure, which are of as great or greater importance, and which have not of late been much considered, though appeals have been made with respect to them before and since the Union in vain. The Irish Parliament considered the question of a tax on absentees. The Parliament of the United Kingdom some thirty years ago assented to the appointment of Lord Devon's commission on the occupation of land. Great volumes of evidence were published; but nothing, or very little, came of them. Mr. Gladstone's Acts were the result, not so much of the beneficent intentions of Parliament, as of a party combination to maintain a majority. But Mr. Gladstone's Acts left untouched the two following subjects, to which I intend to confine my remarks.

1st—Absenteeism. It is difficult to define. Why, it is said, should not a man hold property in different counties in England? If he may, why not in England and Scotland? Why, then, not in England, Scotland, and Ireland? Why should he be considered an absentee (in the sense here used) in the one case and not in the other? It is difficult to give a fully convincing answer. But even in the case of an English proprietor, who never goes near his property, but spends all his income in extravagant living in Italy, &c., such a man is generally looked upon as a nuisance. He throws on other people duties which he ought to discharge; he absorbs his portion of the produce of the land, for which he makes no return in any way; and it is well if the mischief is confined to that which he

causes during his lifetime, and if his family are not brought up in a similar condition of effeminacy (in the males) and nonentity (in the females). But the tenants of such owners in England have many resources in comparison with tenants of an Irish absentee. They have plenty of good markets, valuable business connections, facilities for education, and a much greater share of the enjoyments and even elegancies of life than falls to the lot of Irish country folks. They have often powerful and friendly neighbours who are able and willing to assist in the advancement of their children, and they are not perpetually worried by clerical interference, or if they are, they can choose their own advisers out of a great variety. These resources are all beyond the reach of the great body of tenants of Irish absentees, who, it has been said, draw from this country an income of about two millions, for which they make no return. Political economists tell us that it does not signify where they spend their money—that the general level is maintained, and that is enough. So we are told that a vibration in the atmosphere or the impulse of a wave is never destroyed—that it is merely diffused, and that the general effect remains the same. So if a man squanders money at Naples, that he ought to be spending in improvements, in genial hospitality, or in popular amusements in Connaught, we are told it is of no consequence. The money spent at Naples will react in some beneficial way to the advantage of his Connaught tenants. Poor, uneducated men, earning no wages, living on few and bad potatoes in those unfavoured islands of Arran, may be excused if they cannot see it.

The remedy that was proposed in the Irish Parliament was a tax on absentees, but it would be much better if inducements could be offered which would bring about their permanent residence for a good part of the year in Ireland. The course which I would suggest is, that an address should be presented to the Queen, imploring her Majesty to declare publicly that it was her wish that proprietors of Irish estates should make increased exertions to meet the wishes of their tenantry by residing among them. It cannot be doubted that the only resistance that could be offered by any Government to the presentation of such an address, must be founded on State reasons, and what can they be? Is the connection of the countries likely to be weakened by the residence in Ireland for some months of every year of such men as the Duke of Abercorn or Earl Fitzwilliam? But take the extreme case of a landlord who would, in

consequence of such coercion, become disaffected to the English Government, what would that signify in comparison with the acquisition of the good-will of his fifteen thousand or more tenants? If her Majesty pleased, after consulting her advisers, to comply with the request which I venture to propose, it would then become the duty of the Government to act in uniformity with her Majesty's wishes, and to make it generally understood that no one who could not, in their opinion, show that he had endeavoured to comply with them, would be an acceptable candidate for Government favour either here or in England.

2. Increase in the number of holders in perpetuity. There the Irish peasantry stand at a great disadvantage. In England there are thousands of manors, all of whose tenants enjoyed a perpetuity. This was coupled with some burthens (heriots, &c.), which were found oppressive, and the great bulk of manorial holdings has been enfranchised in our own time, and made equivalent to freeholds. It was intended at the time of the confiscations and re-settlements in Ireland that any proprietor of 3,000 acres should be entitled to erect them into a manor, when, of course, these perpetuities would have followed. But the permission, though general, was not generally brought into operation, and there are very few manors. A great number of leases for ever in some degree supplied the deficiency during the last century, but nothing like to the extent required. An obstacle was offered by family settlements, which generally only allow of leases for thirty-one years, or three lives. I rather think that very few leases for lives are now given, on account of uncertainty of term, and that the usual lease is for thirty-one years.

But there is a great want of small perpetuities, and a want which I think might very easily be supplied, without injury or violence to anyone. The limitation of the length of leases in settlements was intended for the good of the family; that that would be as well secured (with the exception of some imaginary and very improbable future rise in the letting value of land and property) if the landlord in possession was empowered, with the assent, after a full inquiry of a superior court, to sell a perpetuity to the tenant, and invest the money in the funds to the same uses as those in the settlement. This might be done with great advantage to both landlord and tenant. The arrangement would be quite voluntary. Proper exceptions should be made as to demense lands, and any other that may be thought necessary, and the consent of the next heir required

in cases where the superior court thought it should be obtained. I believe that a vast quantity of land might come under such an arrangement, and therefore offer it for consideration.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

DUNALLEY.

Dublin, Sept. 3rd, 1879.

APPENDIX L.

Letter of the Special Correspondent of *The Daily News*, on the Indebtedness of Irish Farmers :—

THE process by which the farmers of the West of Ireland—and I have reason to believe that it is not confined to the West—have got so deeply into debt deserves more attention than has as yet been given to it. That indebtedness exceeds anything that has probably been anticipated. Statements on this subject, which seemed to be grossly exaggerated, have recently been made public. It was said that to one merchant in Castlerea no less than £25,000 was due, of which about £20,000 was for Indian meal and flour; while another merchant in the same town had given credit to an almost equal amount. I made inquiries on the spot as to the truth of these representations. I confessed myself sceptical on the point. I said that for aught I knew some of the shopkeepers and merchants in small towns in the West of Ireland might be millionaires; but to me it seemed strange that they should be able to give such extensive credit. I was assured, and I have no reason to doubt the truth of the statement, that the representations were substantially correct; that one merchant had recently, for his own satisfaction, had his books submitted to an actuary, the result of the investigation being to show that the amount due to him for goods of all kinds was

£26,000. The same story holds good—with a considerable variation, however, as to the amounts—in Castlebar, Westport, Ballina, &c. The farmers have been living beyond their means—beyond the means afforded even in prosperous years—and now that there has been a succession of deficient harvests it is not to be wondered at that a crisis has supervened. Much has been written and published in some quarters about the great forbearance of these merchants. Some of them may deserve all the praise that has been lavished on them, but usury is a thing to which the West and the South of Ireland are by no means strangers; and those who know a little of the mode of dealing adopted by some of these local merchants are of opinion that even if they were to accept as payment in full a composition of 25 per cent. of what is now due to them they would not be heavy losers. It is well known that one man who some years ago made himself prominent as a “patriotic Nationalist” in a district which I shall not for obvious reasons specify—but the facts and name are at the disposal of any one who is curious on the subject—has since obtained a notoriety of a different character, as one who, in his dealings with farmers, and in his numerous bill transactions with them, did not charge the lowest current rate of interest for the loans which he made to his customers. As to the means by which these local traders have been enabled to accommodate the farmers to the extent I have mentioned, their capital has in some cases been amassed by successful speculation in grain, whilst in others it exists chiefly on paper. Bills are given to the English and Scotch merchants from whom they purchase their goods; bills accepted by the farmers are put into the local banks; and the farmers have, in addition, accommodation bills of their own, for the negotiation of which every facility is afforded by the competition of the various banks. It is impossible to pass through the small market-towns of Ireland—North, South, East, or West—without seeing that they are “over-banked.” In Ballina, for example—and there is no reason to suppose that it is exceptional in this respect—there are four banking establishments. It is absurd to suppose that there can be a sufficiency of genuine sound banking business to support these institutions. As a local merchant observed to me, the practice of “robbing Peter to pay Paul,” or rather of borrowing from Peter to pay Paul, has been extensively carried on. When a bill is due in one bank it is met by getting one discounted in another, until the whole round of the banks is made. It is easy to see that this is not conducive to a

sound system of credit. Of course all this is but a repetition of the old story—not peculiar to Irish farmers or to farmers of any country—of people living beyond their means. Nor, perhaps, are Irish farmers deserving of especial censure under the circumstances. They are not the only class who have lived beyond their income, and they have perhaps quite as much excuse for doing so as any other. The great profits made in the breeding and rearing of cattle during the last ten years, and the anticipations naturally enough indulged in that these profits would continue and would probably increase, furnish an excuse for the improvidence of Irish farmers, and for their eagerness to get possession of land at any cost, which, at all events, is intelligible. The difficulty is to find a way out of this state of things. When a man in trade becomes insolvent he becomes bankrupt, and in most cases he is able to resume business again. But to a farmer, and especially to an Irish farmer, bankruptcy means the loss of his farm, and that, as a rule, means ruin. To avoid this he must make the best arrangement he can, and under these circumstances it is not surprising that every creditor should strive to secure a preference. The landlord thinks he has the first claim, the trade creditor relies on his past forbearance as entitling him to a preference over all others; and without bankruptcy, which, as I have said, means ruin, there is no means of compelling anyone to accept less than the full amount of his claim. The result is that a load of debt hangs round the unfortunate man, crushing all spirit and all energy out of him. In Ballina the same cry met me that had greeted my ears everywhere else—the farmers were “steeped in debt.” These were the words used by one who evidently knew their circumstances well. Their condition in this respect he attributed in a considerable degree to the extensive use of artificial manure, which, he said, was expensive, exhausted the land, and was of no advantage in the production of more than one crop. It would, he added, be much better for them if they would take more care of and make better use of the ordinary farm-yard manure, which was not collected or preserved as it might be.

APPENDIX M.

Letter upon Usury in Ireland, from "A Munster Man,"
to the Editor of *The Daily Express*, and appearing in
that journal, 1st October, 1879 :—

To the Editor of "The Daily Express."

SIR,—In your editorial article of 27th inst. you undoubtedly hit the right nail on the head, when you attributed the getting up of the agitation to political agitators and shopkeepers. There is, however, a very numerous class who, though they are nearly all shopkeepers, are deserving of special notice. Those are the keepers of loan offices. It is astonishing the number of those loan offices which exist in every town, no matter how small, and the enormous business which they do. The great majority of them are most respectable men, generally shopkeepers, most frequently grocers and provision dealers, who conduct their business on regular commercial principles. They look on money as an article which they have in the market, the price of which is regulated by the ratio of the supply to the demand, modified by the risk run in each transaction. Their principal business is done with farmers, to whom they advance money on joint notes at three months, signed by the principal and two solvent securities. The most respectable of them discount those notes at a minimum rate of one shilling per pound for the three months—that is, 20 per cent. per annum. This is the minimum rate for first-class leasehold security; what the maximum is it would be very hard to tell. Those men know accurately what the interest of every one of their customers in his farm is worth, and how he stands as to rent, &c., and as long as they are safe they renew, and increase the amount of, those notes to any extent. As soon as the debt reaches the amount they have fixed in their own minds they begin to press the debtor. If he can reduce the debt they make no further advances, but make a very nice thing of it by the discount on repeated renewals. If he cannot they oblige him to give a bill of sale. From that out the keeper of the loan office is, in fact, a middleman

between the occupying tenant and the landlord—the interest of the debt being his profit-rent, and the original rent being the head-rent paid to the landlord. In many cases the original advance was a comparatively small sum, got to make up a sister's fortune or something of the kind, and the interest not being pressed for, is, with characteristic improvidence, added to the amount of the note at every renewal, until the total reaches the value which the lender has still in the interest in the farm. There are numerous cases in which such a debt has been increased fourfold or more, in ten years or less, the discount being added to the note every three months.

No one who is not well acquainted with the country can have any idea of the immense number of farms which are held in this way by the owners of loan-offices, and from which they draw a very considerable income. Large numbers of the farmers who are crying out for a reduction of their rents are paying in this way additions to their rent amounting to 25, 30, or even in some cases 50 per cent. on the amount received by the landlord. This is one of the reasons why there is a demand for an equal reduction on all farms. The man who had his land cheap has been able to raise more money on it than the man who had it dear, and the former in fact pays as much (though not to his landlord) as the latter; and the landlord who is known to be indulgent, has his tenants, as a rule, more deeply in debt than others. When things are in this state it is easy to tell why it is who is most interested in a reduction of rents, and into whose pockets a reduction would go. Now the proprietors of those loan-offices are a power in the land; a very large proportion of those who are more or less in their power have votes, and they can use their power quietly and unostentatiously with an effect which landlords or even priests could not hope to equal. Thus it is very easy to see how the political agitators on one side, and the loan-office men and the shopkeeping class generally, to whom the farmers are indebted, on the other, can play into each other's hands, and how they can make "cat's paws" of the unfortunate farmers whom they have in their power. The exertions which are made and the means which are used to prevent any farmer who is so inclined from surrendering his farm, even when such a course is manifestly for his own interest, is almost incredible; but in most cases they actually dare not do it; they must continue to work for their creditor, and be as much his serfs as if they could be

bought and sold with the land. In the great majority of cases the occupying tenant will never be a penny the better of any reduction of rents. Now one of the principal reasons which has caused such a crisis as at present exists is that for some years back the Land Acts and the chronic agitation kept up for further legislation in favour of tenants had caused the mere possession of land for any term, or at any rent, to possess an altogether fictitious value entirely beyond anything which could be justified by any profit which could be made out of it by farming. Those who bought an interest in farms paid too much for them, and raised most of the money at interest on the security of the land. Those who had farms became extravagant and raised money, and now when a depression in the times occurs a panic sets in, the value of the security on which all this money is advanced is depreciated, and the landlords must be called on to make good the losses occasioned by over speculation in the tenants' interest in the land. Those who get up the land agitation are those who will benefit by it most, and in very few cases indeed will they be the occupying tenants.

A MUNSTER MAN.

APPENDIX N.

The Charter of Mr. Davitt's National Land League :—

THIS body shall be known as the National Land League of Mayo, and shall consist of farmers and others, who will agree to labour for the objects here set forth, and subscribe to the conditions of membership, principles, and rules specified below.

OBJECTS.—The Objects for which this body is organised are—1st. To watch over the interests of the people it represents, and protect the same, as far as may be in its power to do so, from an unjust or capricious exercise of power or privilege on the part of landlords, or any other class in the community.

2nd.—To resort to every means compatible with justice, morality, and right reason which shall not clash defiantly with the constitution upheld by the powers of the British empire in this country, for the

abolition of the present Land laws of Ireland, and the substitution in their place of such a system as shall be in accord with the social rights and interests of our people, the traditions and moral sentiments of our race, and which the contentment and prosperity of our country imperiously demand.

3rd.—Pending a final and satisfactory settlement of the Land Question, the duty of this Body will be to expose the injustice, wrong, or injury which may be inflicted upon any farmer in Mayo, either by rack-renting, eviction, or other arbitrary exercise of power which the existing laws enable the landlords to exercise over their tenantry, by giving all such arbitrary acts the widest publicity, and meeting their perpetration with all the opposition which the laws for the preservation of the peace will permit of. In furtherance of which the following plan will be adopted:—(a) Returns to be obtained, printed, and circulated of the number of landlords in this county, the amount of acreage in possession of same, and the means by which such lands were obtained; the farms held by each, with the conditions under which they are held by their tenants, and the excess of rent paid by same over the Government valuation. (b) To publish by placard or otherwise notice of contemplated evictions for non-payment of exorbitant rent, or other unjust cause, and the convening of a public meeting, if deemed necessary or expedient, as near the scene of such evictions as circumstances will allow, and on the day fixed upon for the same. (c) The publication of a list of evictions carried out, together with cases of rack-renting, giving full particulars of same, name of landlord, agents, &c., concerned, and the number of people evicted by such acts. (d) The publication of the names of all persons who shall rent or occupy land or farms from which others have been dispossessed for non-payment of exorbitant rents, or who shall offer a higher rent for land or farms than that paid by the previous occupier. (e) The publication of reductions of rent and acts of justice or kindness performed by landlords in the county.

4th. This Body to undertake the defence of such of its members, or others of local clubs affiliated with it, who may be required to resist by law actions of landlords or their agents who may purpose doing them injury, wrong, or injustice in connection with their land or farms.

5th. To render assistance when possible to such farmer members as may be evicted, or otherwise wronged by landlords or their agents.

6th. To undertake the organising of local clubs or defence associations in the baronies, towns, and parishes of this county, the holding of public meetings and demonstrations on the Land Question, and the printing of pamphlets on that and other subjects for the information of the farming classes.

7th. Finally, to act as a vigilance committee in Mayo, noting the conduct of its grand jury, poor-law guardians, town commissioners, and Members of Parliament, and pronounce on the manner in which their respective functions are performed, whenever the interests, social or political, of the people represented by this club render it expedient to do so.

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP.—First, to be a member of any local club or defence association in the county, and to be selected by such club or association to represent the same on the central or county association. Second, a desire to co-operate in the carrying out of the foregoing objects and subscribing to the principles here enunciated, with a view of propagating the same and labouring for their successful application in Ireland, will qualify non-representative farmers or others for membership in this Body, subject to the subscription and rules laid down for same. Third, to pay any sum not under 5s. a-year towards the carrying out of the foregoing objects and the end for which this Body is created—namely, the obtaining of the soil of Ireland for the people of Ireland who cultivate it.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.—The land of Ireland belongs to the people of Ireland, to be held and cultivated for the sustenance of those whom God decreed to be the inhabitants thereof. Land being created to supply mankind with the necessities of existence, those who cultivate it to that end have a higher claim to its absolute possession than those who make it an article of barter to be used or disposed of for purposes of profit or pleasure. The end for which the land of a country is created requires an equitable distribution of the same among the people who are to live upon the fruits of their labour in its cultivation. Any restriction, therefore, upon such a distribution by a feudal land system embodying the laws of primogeniture and entail, the amassing of large estates, the claiming of proprietorship under penal obligations from occupiers, and preventing the same from developing the full resources of the land, must necessarily be opposed to the Divine purpose for which it was created, and to the social rights, security, and happi-

ness of the people. "Before the conquest the Irish people knew nothing of absolute property in land; the land virtually belonging to the entire sept, the chief was little more than the managing member of the association. The feudal idea, which views all rights as emanating from a head landlord, came in with the conquest, was associated with foreign dominion, and has never to this day been recognised by the moral sentiments of the people. Originally the offspring, not of industry, but of spoliation, the right has not been allowed to purify itself by protracted possession, but has passed from the original spoliators to others by a series of fresh spoliations, so as to be always connected with the latest and most odious oppression of foreign invaders. In the moral feelings of the Irish people the right to hold the land goes, as it did in the beginning, with the right to till it." Those were the words of John Stuart Mill, the English political economist. The landlord system which an alien Government has imposed upon our country in the place of that which recognised no intermediate ownership between the cultivator of the soil and the State, has reduced Ireland to a degree of poverty and social misery, incompatible with the natural productiveness of this land, and the progressive prosperity of other civilised nations. The area of Ireland and the natural wealth of its soil is capable of supporting from twelve to twenty millions of inhabitants if restrictive land laws did not operate against the full development of the country's resources, and the unfettered cultivation of the land. Yet a population of eight millions, previous to the year 1857, was reduced by death, starvation, and exile, consequent upon an artificial famine and continued impoverishment, to little over five millions at the present day. Decreased population, with its concomitant absorption of small holdings into large estates, has produced no beneficial change in the condition of the existing farming classes, who are compelled by the coercion of necessity, in the absence of manufacturing industry, to an acceptance of a non-alternative bargain in the shape of an exorbitant rent in order to obtain the use of the soil. The dread of eviction or rack-renting must necessarily operate against that expenditure of labour and enterprise in the cultivation of the land and improvement of farm dwellings and premises, which follow in every country where the fruit of the people's industry is protected by the State. Hence the soil of Ireland is worse and less cultivated, and the livings and habitations of its agricultural class more wretched, than in any country

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in the civilised world. Over six million acres of Irish land are owned by less than three hundred individuals, twelve of whom are in possession of 1,297,888 acres between them, while five millions of the Irish people own not a solitary acre. For the protection of the proprietorial rights of the few thousand landlords in the country a standing army of semi-military police is maintained, which the landless millions have to support, while the conduct of the landocracy in the exercise of its legal privileges occasions almost all the evils under which our people suffer. Thus the right of the soil cultivators, their security from arbitrary disturbance, and incentives to local advancement, together with the general well-being, peace, and prosperity of the people at large, are sacrificed for the benefit of a class insignificant in numbers, and of least account in all that goes towards the maintenance of a country, but which, by the aid of existing land laws, extracts some twenty million pounds annually from the soil of Ireland without conferring any single benefit in return on the same, or the people by whose industry it is produced. If the land in possession of, say, 744 landlords in this country was divided into twenty-acre farms, it would support, in ease and comparative independence, over two and a-half millions of our people. To substitute for such an unjust and anomalous system as the present land code, one that would show an equal protection and solicitude for the social-rights and well-being of the labouring millions, as that shown for those of the wealthy, but non-operative few, is the principle upon which enlightened statesmanship aims at following in modern times, in order to meet the growing necessities of that popular intelligence and awakening civilisation which demand the sweeping away of those feudal laws opposed to the social progress and ideas of the age ; sacrificing the interests of the few to the welfare of the many by the abolition of the feudal land codes, has laid the foundation of solid governments, and secured the content of peoples in most European countries. The interests of the landlords of Ireland are pecuniary, and can be compensated, but the interests of the people of Ireland, dependent upon the produce of the soil, is their very existence. In denouncing existing land laws, and demanding in their place such a system as will recognise and establish the cultivator of the soil as its proprietor, we neither purpose nor demand the confiscation of the interests which the landlords now hold in the land, but simply ask that compensation be given them for the

loss of the said rights when the State, for the peace, benefit, and happiness of the people, shall decree the abolition of the present system. We appeal to the farmers of Ireland to be up and doing at once, and organise themselves forthwith in order that their full strength may be put forth in behalf of themselves and their country in efforts to obtain what has brought security and comparative plenty to the farming classes of continental countries. Without an evidence of earnestness and practical determination being shown now by the farmers of Ireland and their friends in a demand for a small proprietary, which alone can fully settle the great Land Question of the country, the tribunal of public opinion will neither recognise the urgent necessity for such a change, nor lend its influence in ameliorating the condition, or redressing the social and political wrongs of which we complain. Let us remember, in the words of one of Ireland's greatest sons, that the land is the fount whence we all ultimately draw, and if the terms on which the land is cultivated be unfair, if the agricultural system of the country be unsound, then the entire structure is rotten and will inevitably come down. Let us never forget that mere appeals to the public to encourage native industry in other departments must be utterly futile as long as the great and paramount native industry of the farmer is neglected. In vain shall we try to rouse the national spirit if the very men who make a nation sink into paupers before our faces. Paupers have no country, no rights, no duties, and, in short, if we permit the small farmers to be reduced to pauperism, if we see them compelled to give up their lands and throw themselves on public relief, there is an end of Ireland.

APPENDIX O.

Mr. Parnell's Appeal to the Irish Race for the Sustainment of the Irish National Land Movement :—

THE land and rent agitation which has originated in the West of Ireland, and is rapidly spreading throughout the country, has now assumed such national proportions that it becomes a question of first importance to all who sympathise with its legitimate objects

how best to guide the popular movement to the attainment of those ends. Temporary abatements of excessive rents are being and may continue to be obtained through the various agencies of a sympathetic but unorganised advocacy, which the existing widespread and alarming distress elicits from the press and bodies of the community ; but without the creation of some constituted guide or directing influence the primary, if not the sole, cause of the existing poverty of the agricultural classes will not be removed.

Independent of the effect which the products of the vast free lands of America and other favoured countries must have in competition with the produce created under rent-tied and paralysing conditions in Ireland, almost all the evils under which her people suffer are referable to a land system glaringly antagonistic to the first principles of justice and fair government, which place the good of the greatest number above the privileged gratification of the few. Landlordism, founded as an institution of systematic partiality, has proved itself but too true to the spirit of its origin by reducing all who are dependent on, but unprotected by ownership of, the soil, to a degraded, semi-mendicant existence, and in addition induces the loss of that independent character which arises from an independence of position.

The duties which feudal laws and customs exacted in return from those in whom they recognised certain arbitrary rights, have been ignored by Irish landlordism in its relations to the soil and those dependent upon the fruits of its cultivation ; thus adding to the other indictments against the system a non-fulfilment of essential obligations.

Any land system which does not tend to improve the value of land and enable cultivation to meet the exigencies of those dependent upon its produce stands self-condemned as barbarous, unjust, and reprehensible.

The diminished population of our country, the millions of our race who perished in or fled from a land in which God intended they should not die by hunger ; the continued struggle with poverty which those have to maintain who yet cling to their native soil ; and the periodic climaxation of the impoverishing influences which landlordism exercises upon the social life of Ireland, demand at last, in face of yet another impending national calamity, the application of a remedy which can no longer be denied the salvation of a people. In contrast to the social wretchedness to which a barbarous

land system has reduced our country is the rapidly progressing prosperity of those people at whose demand or for whose benefit such a system has been swept away, and the cultivator of the soil has replaced the landlord as its proprietor. The surplus produce of lands thus freed and agricultural industry thus relieved from its rent-taxation, is now placed, by easy transit over sea and land, in competition, with what is produced under conditions of land tenure the most unfavourable, and incentives to toil the least encouraging, that ever regulated the chief industry of any civilised country. When to this is added the adverse influences of successive bad seasons, on the point of culminating in what threatens to be the worst yet experienced since famine years, the position of the Irish farmer and those depending upon the fruits of his enterprise and labour assumes an aspect of menacing ruin, which to consider as transient or accidental, would be a criminal disregard of the vital existence of a people.

Impelled by the desperate circumstances of their situation, the farming and other classes concerned have proclaimed their grievances in public meetings and by the press, demanding the remedies which alone can redress them. A consensus of opinion apart from immediate interestedness has declared that the remedy put forward by the present agitation is founded on justice, reason, and expediency, and that its application is absolutely essential to meet the evils complained of, and insure the prosperity and contentment of Ireland. In formulating a demand for ownership of the soil by the occupiers in substitution for that of the landlords, the people of Ireland neither contemplate nor ask for the confiscation of those proprietorial rights which existing laws must necessarily recognise and protect; but that for the transfer of those rights to an industrial ownership a fair compensation may be given to those who shall be called upon to agree to such transfer for the settlement of the agrarian strife of the country and the supreme good of its people.

To carry out a project as vast as that which we contemplate must require means in proportion to the difficulties that must be encountered in the undertaking. Tenants' Defence Associations must be organised in every county, and assistance be rendered to farmers who may be called upon to defend themselves against an unjust or capricious exercise of landlord power. The wealth of Ireland is almost entirely in the hands of that class which we propose for the good of the country to deprive of the absolute possession of the soil, and it is but natural to expect that strong and influential opposition

will be offered by those who will be called upon to surrender the privileges they have so long enjoyed—even in virtue of compensation and expediency.

To meet this opposition, and guide the National movement for freeing the land of Ireland, assistance of two kinds must be forthcoming: the one, and most essential kind, is an organised development of earnestness and a resolute attitude on the part of the six hundred thousand landless farmers of Ireland, as well as those whose daily bread depends upon the prosperity of their fatherland, in demanding their just rights as guaranteed in the settlement we propose. The second aid required is money. Neither has ever been wanting when the national spirit of our country and the patriotism of her exiled sons have been appealed to in a patriotic cause, and we are confident they will not be withheld now when the very soil of Ireland is the object we desire to free, and the land-slavery of our people the thing we are resolved shall be abolished for ever. None of our race have had such bitter experience of the wrongs of landlordism as those who have been compelled to seek abroad the food denied them at home, and none should more readily and generously sympathise with those who are resolved to retain a firm grip of their Irish homesteads than the exiled who were forced by iniquitous laws to leave them.

In the great Shelter Land of Peoples ten millions of the Irish race have found a home. The system we aspire to abolish has banished them from Ireland. Benefiting by laws which afford equal protection and encouragement to all citizens of the great republic of America, they can appreciate the efforts which aim at affording equal incentives to progress to their crushed and persecuted kindred here.

Not alone to our fellow-countrymen in America, but to all whom evil laws have scattered the world over, as well as to all other nationalities who sympathise with a wronged and impoverished people, who at last are resolved upon a remedy for the evils afflicting them, do we call for an advocacy of our cause, and support in our efforts to achieve its success.

In constituting ourselves a committee for the purpose of carrying out this work, we are animated with but one desire—to aid the tenant-farmers and those depending upon the soil of Ireland, to lift themselves from the misery and social degradation in which they are plunged, into a position where the notice to quit and the rack-rent

will not operate against their industry, security, and contentment. We are influenced by no party spirit in making this appeal, nor do we in any way purpose to place this committee in antagonism with existing bodies or organisations employed in other departments of national labour. To free the land of Ireland from the unwise and unjust restrictions which militate against its proper cultivation, and prevent the development of its full resources, should be a labour above the customary influences of party or sectional strife, and be guided alone by motives of disinterested effort for the benefit of our common country, and the improvement, contentment, and prosperity of the greatest number of our fellow-countrymen.

The grounds upon which we feel authorised to issue this appeal, are the fact of our being either directly or indirectly connected with the agitation which has sprung from the distress that has evoked a national condemnation of the present land system. As this land movement has won an endorsement from public opinion of an occupier proprietary settlement of the Land Question, those who have advocated such a remedy prior to and in conjunction with the national demand now made for it, feel themselves justified in taking such steps as may be best calculated to insure its application to the existing land evils of our country.

In pursuance of this intention we issue this Appeal to Irishmen the world over, and to those who sympathise with the object in view, to aid us in our efforts to obtain for our people the possession of an unfettered soil, and for Ireland the benefits which must result from an unrestricted development of its products and resources.

APPENDIX P.

Letter of Sir George Bowyer repudiating Mr. Parnell's Land Policy :—

SIR,—The time has come when it is my duty, as an old and experienced Irish member, to address a few words to my constituents to the people of Ireland, and even to my own countrymen, on the present grave state of affairs in Ireland. I am the more obliged to

speaking plain words of truth to the people of Ireland, because I owe them a heavy debt of gratitude; for they, during many years, gave me a Parliamentary refuge from the sectarian prejudices of my own country, which practically excluded me from public life. I was returned to this Parliament to support the policy of Mr. Butt. My constituents now declare by a solemn resolution that I must follow that of Mr. Parnell. I distinctly decline to do so. I decline because I will not lend myself to delude and mislead the people.

When I was returned as a Home Ruler, I hoped that the movement might, with moderation, prudence, and wisdom, be made beneficial to Ireland without prejudicing any British or Imperial interests. With these views, I wrote an elaborate letter pointing out the difficulties of the subject, and the principles of public law which it involved. I recommended that a well-selected committee of Members of Parliament and others should study the matter profoundly, and prepare a mature plan meeting all the difficulties. I pointed out the principles of the American Constitution, as explained in Kent and the "Federalist," and the decisions of the Supreme Court. I conceived that in this way a statesmanlike scheme could be exhibited, providing that Irish business should be done in Ireland—thus greatly relieving the Imperial Parliament—without derogation or injury to that sovereign body, and without endangering the integrity of the Empire. These were my views. Whether right or wrong is not material now. I told my constituents that the first thing must be to determine the question, What is Home Rule? I said they would get nothing without the consent of the English and Scotch members, and that neither the English nor the Scotch members would consent to anything they did not thoroughly understand. It was necessary to show to England and Scotland that Home Rule was *quod tibi non nocet et alteri prodest*. I was sure that anything clear, practicable, and feasible would be met in a generous spirit by the Prime Minister and the House of Commons.

My letter was unfortunate. It raised such a storm of disapprobation that I was obliged to withdraw it. Having thus failed, I could only watch the course of events. But such a signal failure of a practical and reasonable proposal augured ill for the future. And so the event turned out. In the House there were the most divergent views among those who called themselves Home Rulers, and an utter inability to meet the objections raised in every part of that assembly. Federalism was relied upon. It was inapplicable. What

one member of the party said another contradicted. I will not use the word ignorant, but the debate on a grave and arduous problem of public law was not learned. Crushing defeats were inevitable, and they came. The Irish policy developed into obstruction. Mr. Butt was insulted and rejected, though he had earned considerable station and respect in the House. Inexperienced and inferior men came to the front. I will not discuss obstruction; it has certainly done one thing—it has made impossible any sort of Home Rule. The Irish members might in the present Parliament, by a vigilant and prudent reserve, have exercised great influence over the deliberations of the House and the policy of the Empire. A dignified, patriotic, and statesmanlike course must have secured to them great weight with the Government, the House of Commons, and the country. Speaking in the name of Ireland, they undoubtedly would have obtained not only a respectful hearing, but substantial justice. A totally different policy was pursued. The prudent counsels of Mr. Butt were rejected, and the Parliamentary conduct and tactics of the most active and leading members of the Irish party became an open war against the House of Commons, against England and Scotland, and the interests of the Empire. Such is the present position in which we find ourselves. The most unwise, the most inexperienced, and the most ignorant members of the Irish representation are the leaders of the so-called party of action, and they are deluding and misleading them into a course which must end in rebellion and ruin. These words are strong, but they are sanctioned by his Eminence Cardinal Cullen. That eminent and venerated prelate said to me in the most solemn manner, that the leaders of the Irish party were deceiving and deluding the people, and that the course which they were taking led to treason and rebellion. His Eminence added, "If they go on I will denounce them." If his Eminence were now living he would, I believe, do what he said. He refrained only because he hoped for a sounder state of public opinion.

The agricultural distress in Ireland is most deeply to be deplored, and must engage the anxious attention of the Government and Parliament. The reclamation of waste land, drainage, improved agriculture, and reproductive public works, are urgently desirable. But political agitation, monster meetings, leagues, and conventions throw grave difficulties in the way of any remedial measures. Ireland has many tens of thousands of acres either uncultivated or

comparatively unproductive. If the country had been allowed to have twenty, or even ten years of peace, free from agitation or agrarian crimes, many millions would have been invested in the cultivation of the soil. The seasons are in the hands of Providence, but no doubt the condition of the people would be very different from what it is now. Thousands would have lived happily at home instead of emigrating, or they would have emigrated simply for their own profit and advantage.

I have always been a supporter of tenant-right; but things have now been pushed far beyond that. Mr. Parnell, who styles himself the leader of the people of Ireland, proposed in a speech at Newry that the position of landlords should be so disagreeable and disastrous as to make them glad to sell their land on any terms, and then no one was to dare to buy except the tenants. Comment is superfluous. Mr. Parnell is in earnest, and he is going to the United States to stir up enmity against England and obtain money in furtherance of his designs. The tenant-farmers have been told repeatedly, even in the presence of priests, that if their landlords will not come to their terms they are to "stick to the homestead and land," and pay no rent at all, and this advice has been adopted widely. Those people are Catholics. I want to know how such a doctrine can be reconciled to the Catholic religion. I say advisedly that no one, priest or layman, can produce any theological authority, from St. Thomas Aquinas to the penny Catechism, to gainsay the proposition that a tenant who refuses to pay so much rent as he is able to pay, and deliberately "sticks to the homestead and the land" which belongs to his landlord, is guilty of mortal sin within the meaning of the Seventh Commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." When such immoral and sinful doctrines are publicly preached in the presence of members of Parliament, and even priests, we cannot wonder at the cries of "Shoot him!" and "An ounce of lead!" which, I regret to say, have often been uttered at public meetings. In some instances they were met by voices saying "No, no;" but those cries were not rebuked by persons who ought to have rebuked them. Another result of the lawless and violent utterances of mob orators is, that tenants ready and willing to pay their rents are threatened with death. This lamentable condition of things is not to be met by coercion acts, which are fraught with cruelty and injustice. They may repress, but they leave behind them a sense of wrong, and a desire for vengeance. Tallyrand said that any fool

could govern under a state of siege. The Prime Minister is a truly great statesman, and will not resort to such clumsy machinery. No discouragement will prevent him from considering deeply what remedial measures can be adopted to relieve the sufferings of the Irish population, and it will be manifest to all that demagogues, agitators, and obstructionists are the real enemies of their country.

I have now, as an old Irish member, performed a painful and unpopular duty. I will not obey *civium ardor prava jubentium* any more than I would *vultus instantus tyranni*. I may be doomed to exclusion from Parliament. If so, I will retire from public life altogether and into perpetual obscurity; but I will not connive, even by silence, at a policy leading to treason, and doctrines opposed to morals and religion, and subversive of government and civil society.

GEORGE BOWYER,
M.P. for the County of Wexford.

Radley Park, Nov. 12.

JAMES REDPATH

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